SILPHEED! Have Sega overdone the hype? Exclusive in-depth Mega-CD review inside

MEGA POWER

SEPT 1993
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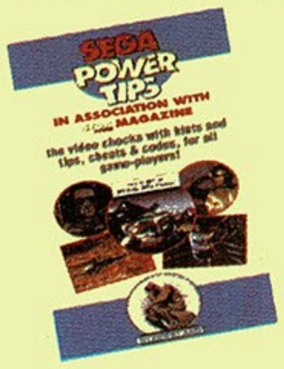

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POWER

september 1993

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Electronic Arts will scare the pants off you. We bring you the exclusive review of Haunting in this issue.

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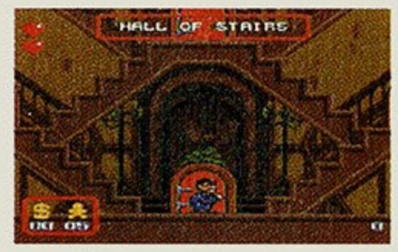

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PRESS start

Just as we thought we'd filled the review pages this month, what should arrive through the door but the one-and-only, much-awaited, much-hyped, CD game of the future, *Silpheed*! Emergency procedures were implemented (holidays cancelled, extra correspondents drafted in, etc) to squeeze this potentially mammoth game into the remaining four pages, which we were going to devote to that other over-hyped Mega-CD game, *Thunderhawk*. Unfortunately, Core Design stiffed us on the *Thunderhawk* review (excuses, excuses!) so thankfully we didn't have any tough decisions as to which game we should drop.

As we reveal on page 48, though, *Silpheed* provided us with more than a few surprises. First off, we were surprised that there was no co-processor cart with it (some UK mags – not us, though – said Sega were to bundle one). Then we loaded it up and were amazed by the brilliant 3-D graphics in the introduction. But, as you'll discover from reading the review, *Silpheed* is THE disappointment of the year. When you first play it, *Space Invaders* springs to mind. (Widely accepted in the MEGA POWER offices as not being a good sign...) And even if the later levels are much better, why bother having the sub-standard earlier ones?

I believe Sega have well and truly conned us on this one. Let's just hope *Virtua Racing* lives up to the incredible hype surrounding it and its DSP chip...

dominic handy

dave perry

The boy from Torquay has been having a rough time of it recently. After challenging Electronic Arts' Dave Wilson last month, The Kid's phone has been ringing constantly with offers of a challenge. However, as usual, the PR people aren't playing by the rules: they want to use playtesters and whizz-kids they've dragged off the street to act as their representatives. That's not in the rules, folks. The premise is to see just how good gamesplayers the people who sell the games are; playtesters are obviously fine gamesplayers – it's their job!

This month Dave puts Virgin in their place, although his match versus PR girl Caroline Stokes provided a few shocks for The Kid. Dave also bashes *Mortal Kombat* to the ground, bounces with *Bubsy* and fulfils a life-long ambition in *Two Tribes*.

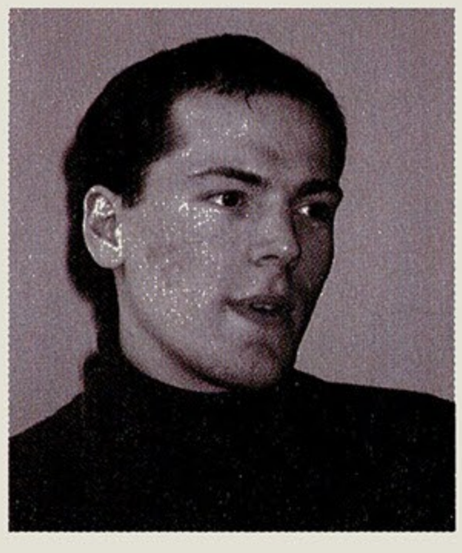
steve bough

Steve's reviews are like buses. You wait ages and ages for one to get written, then along come three in a row. Wining and dining has put a lot of strain on Steve this month – and it's starting to show. This sad case has become unhealthily addicted to *Night Trap*, and constantly mutters how Kelli has turned against him and why Megan is "just looking for the right man".

Steve's just in the process of setting up a band (starring Si Quest and Optic Al), and has subsequently become the office authority on game soundtracks. But, believe us, listening to *Championship Bowling* on full volume is not an education, Steve.

On Steve's hot list this month are the CD surprises, *Sherlock Holmes II* and *Silpheed*, and the spooky tale of *Haunting*.

dominic handy



After attending the press launch of Sega World (with ALL the machines on freeplay), Dom's feet have hardly been under the desk this month. In fact, he'd have been down at Sega World every hour of the day if only he could have got a car phone installed on the *Virtua Racing* machine. Turn to page 12 to be guided by Dom around the 200+ games Sega World has to offer.

After getting in with Debbie Gibson last month, Dom's been on the trail of the stars again this month. The Fat Lady Sings aren't your conventional pop stars, though, but they have an unhealthy addiction for the blue spiky one. Read what lead singer Nick Kelly had to say about it on page 98.

MP

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POWER NOWS

JURASSIC PARK

Sega

On all formats, *Jurassic Park* has been conspicuous by its late appearance. Luckily, the independently-programmed Sega version hasn't had to go through all the reprogramming of the SNES version (which, apparently, Nintendo weren't too happy with), but it's still taking its time appearing, with the film already out for a couple of months now. The game follows the fortunes of Dr Grant as he tries to rid the park of the dinosaurs – you can also play some levels as the raptor.

The game packs a 16Mbit cart and Sega are claiming super fluid animation in the style of *Flashback*. If the game goes some way to reaching the success of the film, we should be in for a treat.

Street date: September 1993

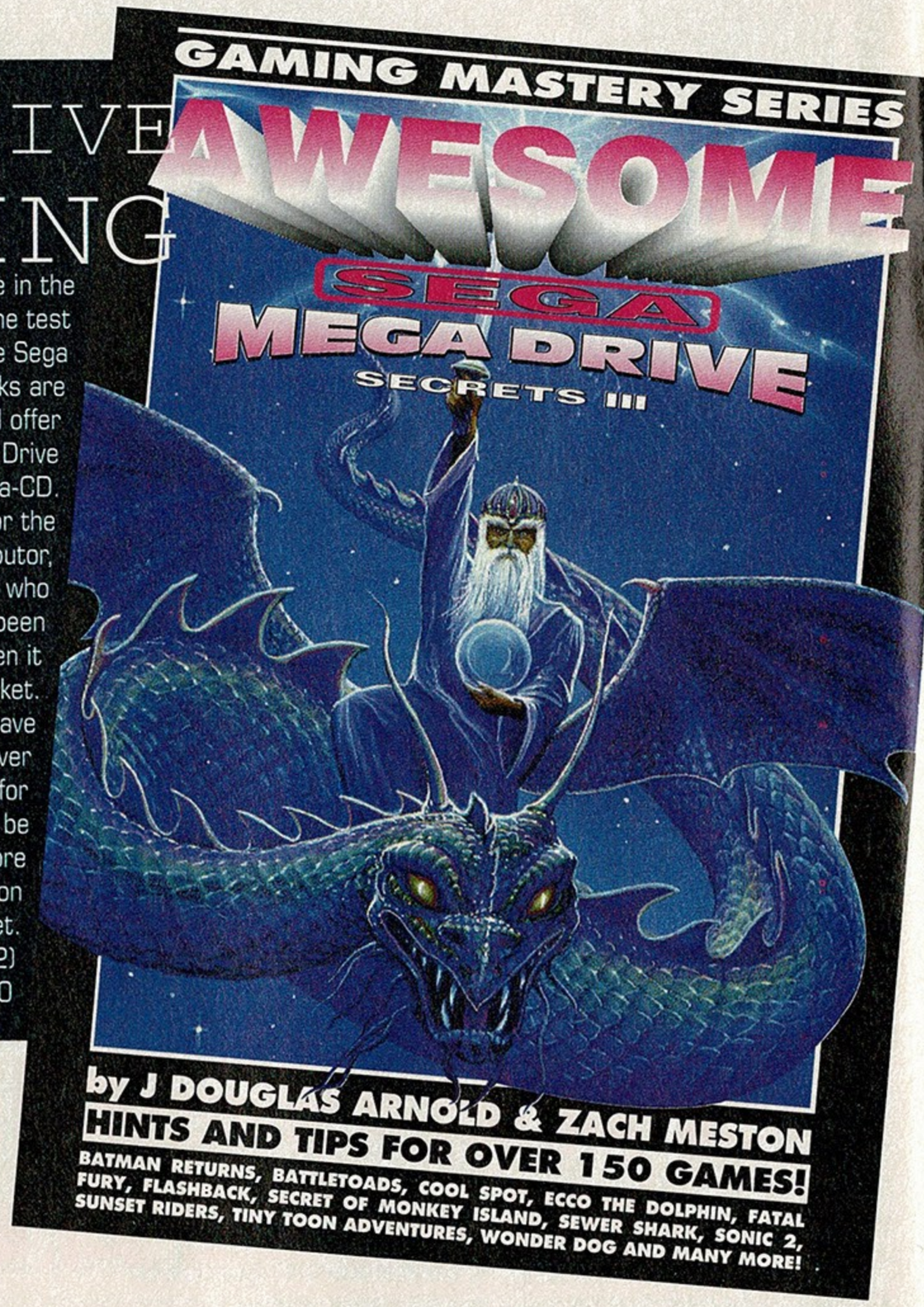
EXCESSIVE TIPPING

Tips books have come and gone in the Sega world, and few have stood the test of time better than The Awesome Sega Mega Drive Secrets series. The books are now in their third incarnation, and offer even more tips and cheats on Mega Drive and Mega-CD.

The game was originally written for the American market, but its UK distributor, Paragon Publishing (the same folks who handle MEGA POWER) have diligently been through the whole book and rewritten it for the UK market.

There are over 150 games which have been busted and beaten, with over 500 pictures, and full solutions for over 30 games. At just £9.99 you'd be hard-pushed to find a more comprehensive, up-to-date book on the market.

More info: Paragon Publishing (0202) 299900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THUNDERHAWK

Core Design

Derby-based Core Design should have *Thunderhawk* ready for release next month. According to its developers, it's the biggest game yet to hit the Mega-CD.

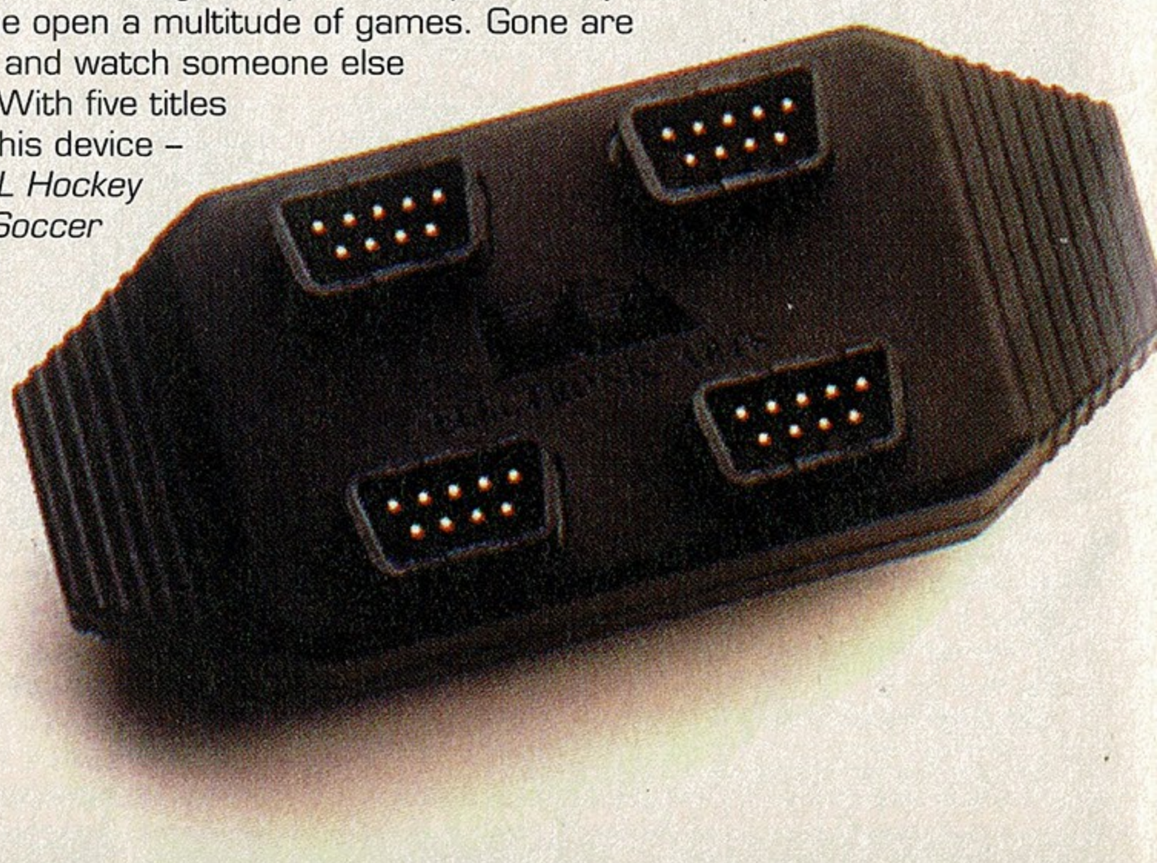
Thunderhawk is a helicopter flight simulation which plops you directly behind the controls, as a crack fighter pilot. Sega, who will be officially marketing and distributing the game, are totally confident that this one will go ballistic. Meanwhile, we're not too convinced after playing a few levels of an early preview version, but would be happy to be proved wrong. Core are previously responsible for the CD versions *Chuck Rock*, *Wonder Dog* and *Jaguar XJ220* so are fully conversant with the ins and outs of programming on the Mega-CD.

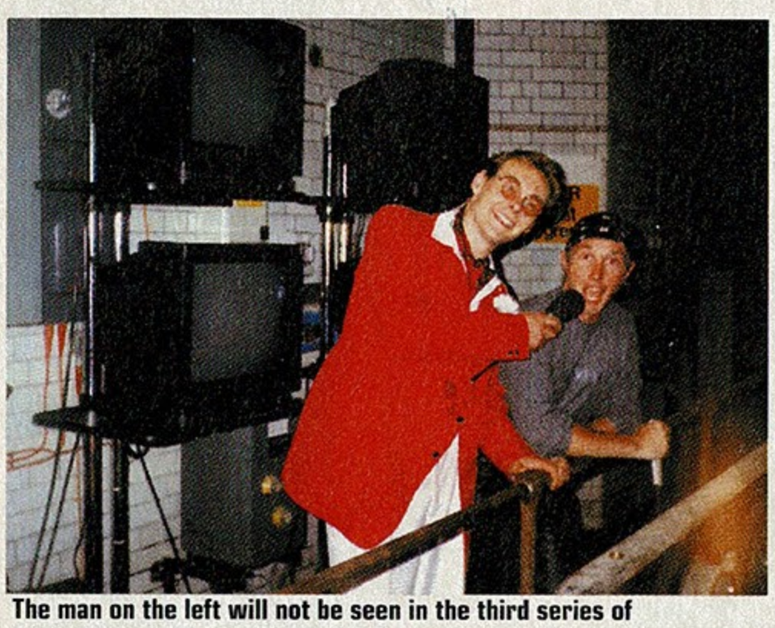
THE FOURTH MAN

Following closely in the footsteps warily tread by Sega, Electronic Arts announce their Four-Way Play. With Sega games currently exploding into four-player extravaganzas, Electronic Arts, the main exponent of the multi-player game, have developed their own little device in competition to Sega's Tap. As Sega haven't developed a UK version of their own Tap, we still can't say if they are compatible, however, we have tried EA games with Sega's Japanese Tap and they don't work.

The Four-Way Play blows wide open a multitude of games. Gone are the days where you have to sit and watch someone else play, hoping they will die soon. With five titles already designed for use with this device – *General Chaos*, *Bill Walsh*, *NHL Hockey 94*, *John Madden 94* and *EA Soccer* – more titles are already in the pipeline. All of EA's four-player games have a sticker explaining compatibility on the box, so look out for it. The Four-Way Play allows two on two, three on one or four humans against the computer. This is definitely the most sociable device of the year.

More info: Electronic Arts (0753) 549442





The man on the left will not be seen in the third series of GamesMaster. The man on the right, however, will do anything for a bit of TV exposure. You'll be able to see how Dave Perry and fellow celebs, Dani Behr, Ian Botham and Gabrielle do in the third series of GamesMaster, shot in Oxford prison and hosted by The Press Gang's Dexter Fletcher, airing sometime in September.

As you may already know, Hewland International, the production company behind Channel Four's GamesMaster have failed to renew their contract with high-profile presenter Dominik Diamond.

After many months hunting, Hewland have now come up with their perfect replacement, Dexter Fletcher. The name may not be immediately familiar to you, but Fletcher's previous credits include a starring role in the film The Rachel Papers, costarring Ione Skye, and increasingly occasional cameos in the successful teen series The Press Gang.

The new show is to be set in Oxford at an imaginary academy for gamesplayers. Celebrity guests already confirmed for the third series include MEGA POWER's Dave Perry, The Word's Dani Behr, popstrell Gabrielle, Ian Botham, MEGA POWER's Dave Perry, Utah Saints, Paul Whitehouse (Harry Enfield's sidekick) and, not forgetting, MEGA POWER's Dave Perry. Shooting starts in August, with the first show going out in September.

TERMINATOR VS ROBOCOP

Virgin

Obtaining the rights to not one but two legendary screen heroes is no easy feat, but if anyone can do it, Virgin (with all their celeb contacts in the biz) can. Unleashed on a 16Mbit cartridge, the American-developed game has stuck to the tried and tested formula of a platform shoot-'em-up. The game promises to be extremely violent, in keeping with the motion picture, so expect to see the game issued with a special warning, and more than likely a rating.

The game follows 12 levels wherein *RoboCop* is up against dozens of Terminators and cyborgs. Speech has been sampled from the film to add more realism to the already bloody scenario. Don't expect to get much brain exercise here.

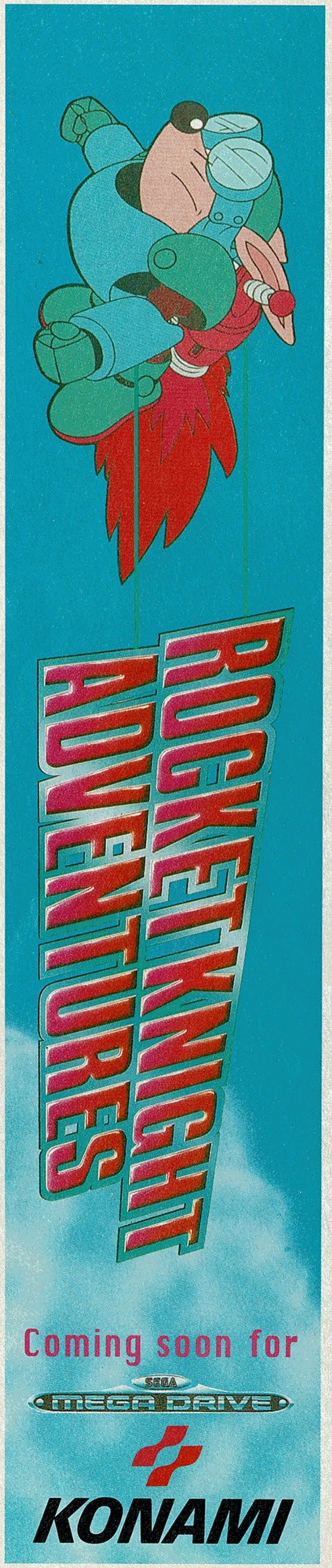
Street date: December 1993

CHUCK ROCK 2: SON OF CHUCK

Core Design

Coming on Mega-CD and Mega Drive at the same time (according to Sega's notoriously inaccurate release schedule), the second *Chuck Rock* adventure has seen our hero kidnapped by the evil Brick Jagger, boss of a rival car firm. The only thing that can save Chuck is his tiny, but very strong son Chuck Jnr. The game is reputed to much bigger and more difficult than its predecessor, but will keep with the same format and humour of the first. First reports, however, are none too promising, although we wouldn't want to prejudge a sequel!

Street date: October 1993



POWER NEWS

Recent reports suggest that Sonic the Hedgehog has becoming a scout. Baden-Powell's philosophy was to welcome all boys to his youth organisation, and we're assured that he wouldn't object to young Sonic being enrolled – just so long as Sonic can tie knots.

Sega have got together with The Scout Association to raise money for The Promise Appeal. By selling over 2.5 million Sonic scratchcards at 50p each, the Scouts hope to be able to donate 15p from each to the local Scout group and the rest to the Scout HQ for distribution to charity.

On each card there are questions on the theme of speed, and if all are answered correctly, a scratch panel will reveal the winner's prize. Goodies range from a Mega-CD and Mega Drives to 5000 exclusive Sonic posters. The added bonus for card buyers is that it also allows them 10% off Sega software bought from any Comet store.

The whole promotion will run from September 18 to December 18. With former Scouts such as John Major, Ken Dodd and George Michael on their books, the Scouts hope some will come out of the closet and visibly support the cause.

And what do the boys from the Scouts get out of it? Each of them will receive a special Sonic woggle!

STEREO MD

TV old timers, Bush have announced the launch of the first ever 14" Nicam colour TV. So, what's so special about that? Well, it's the first TV in the UK to offer full stereo sound capability on a screen this small. It's specifically designed for use with computer game consoles, but sacrifices nothing in quality, keeping high quality picture and sound.

The 1557NTX can deliver the stereo sound through the two speakers on the side, but also has standard sockets on the back for connecting external speakers (which Bush also produce). It also has a full-function remote control, teletext, onscreen display and, of particular interest to Mega Drive owners, a scart socket.

This is the ideal second television for any household, combining the features of larger, more expensive sets without compromising the compact size. You should be able to pick up the 1557NTX at any decent electrical retailer for a suggested retail price of around £250, which, considering the features, isn't bad value at all!

More info: Bush Radio (0923) 859777

SHINOBI 3

Sega

The great Joe Mushashi finally gets his third airing next month as *Shinobi 3* hits the shops after a long delay. The latest escapade sees the master of Ninjitsu back to his fighting best. In every incarnation, the *Shinobi* series has remained successful, and while nothing particularly new is included in this version, it does well to build on the solid and addictive platform beat-'em-up design of the earlier games. Throughout eight levels, Joe can use his magic and martial arts skills to defeat the endless enemies he'll face. With the exact release of *Street Fighter II* still in doubt, *Shinobi 3* should provide a worthy alternative.

Street date: September 1993

Ecco the lifeguard

Sega's new-age eco-mascot, Ecco is to star in an exclusive teaching aid being distributed to 25,000 primary schools throughout the UK this month.

In conjunction with the Royal Life Saving Society UK and the English Schools Swimming Association, Sega are sponsoring an educational video, leaflets, teacher packs and posters promoting safe swimming. The course fulfils all the requirements of the national curriculum, and has been positively received by all the teaching fraternity.

The 20-minute video features Ecco the dolphin (pictured) swimming through the blue waters of the Pacific as Nicole Eggert (pictured) and David Charvet from the latest New Baywatch series tell the viewer how they too can enjoy safe swimming.

Asked to comment on why the Lifeguard Potential scheme has been produced in conjunction with the Baywatch stars, Celia Godsell, director of the RLSS UK, explained: "Our research has shown us overwhelmingly that the lifeguard is viewed by children as a very positive role model. We have found that a water safety message delivered by lifeguards has the best chances of being received." On the sponsorship by Sega, prominent supporter Lord Norrie commented: "Sega are giving every school what it takes to make sure water safety and swimming are taught well enough to save lives."

The Lifeguard Potential scheme is latest in a long-running association with the primary schools of the UK, which started with a competition promoting and educating on the advertising and marketing of Sega's products last year.

POWER NOWS

LANDSTALKER

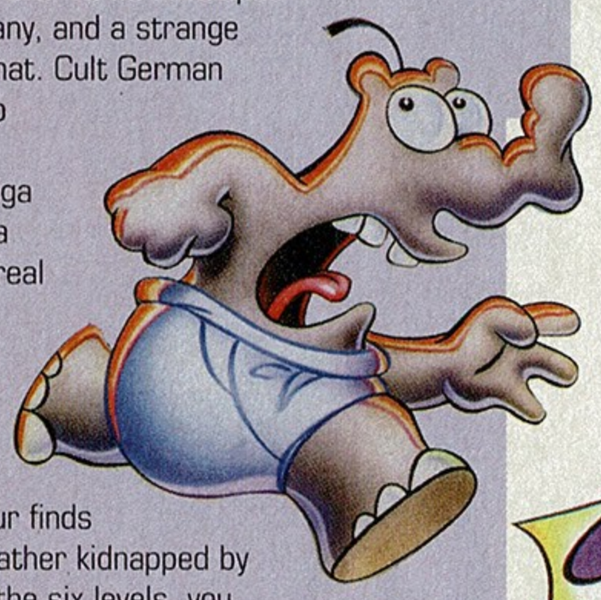
Sega

For those of you that have seen the impressive Japanese import version, be prepared for a superb English translation of *Landstalker*. A massive 16Mbit cartridge ensures the game is huge, fully utilising the innovative 3-D block graphics generation technique. *Landstalker* is a combination of RPG puzzles and platform missions, and, being programmed by the guys that did *Shining Force*, offers the gamer the best possible RPG entertainment. This game is ginormous, so it's just as well the cart comes complete with battery back-up (which means it won't be cheap!). RPGs came of age in Japan years ago, and now us Brits can have a taste of the action.

Street date: October 1993

THE OTTIFANTS

Sega



The first game ever to be developed by Sega Germany, and a strange game it is at that. Cult German comedian, Otto Waalkes approached Sega and proposed a game with surreal connotations. The result is *The Ottifants*. Six levels of obscure humour finds the Ottifants' father kidnapped by aliens. Within the six levels, you must search for your father whilst battling against rubber elephants, strangling plants and killer robots. You also have a magic cape with which you can conduct all kinds of strange magic. All this has the makings of a bizarre game – you expect nothing less from those wacky Germans.

Street date: October 1993

PUGGSY

Psygnosis

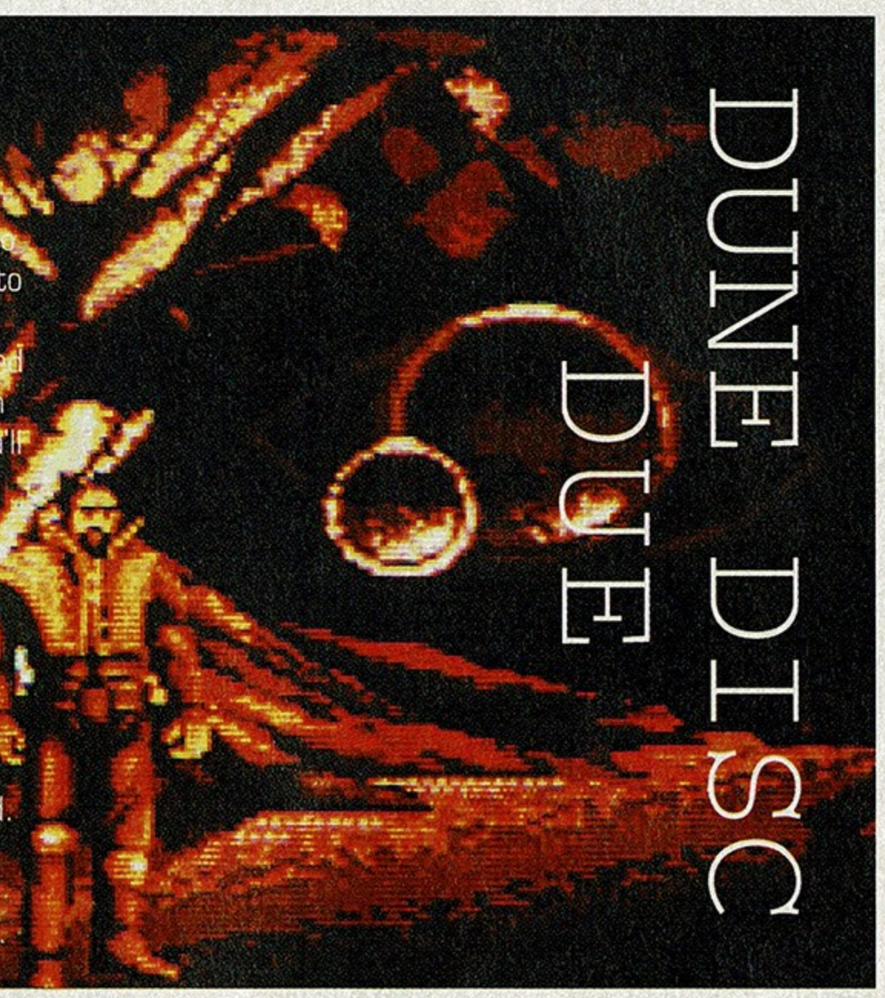
The eponymous Puggsy was travelling through the galaxies in search of new friends. Forced to land on the nearest inhabitable planet, due to problems with his ship, Puggsy sets off in search of help.

The game is a cross between platform and puzzle, with the emphasis being on interacting with your surroundings. Various objects throughout the game will help Puggsy on his quest for his ship, which was stolen by racoons. There are over 51 levels plus a ton of secret rooms. Also offered is a save option and over 20 interactive objects per level. You'll never be bored in *Puggsy*.

Street date: December 1993

Following on from *The Terminator*, which they hope to release next month, Virgin come up with their second Mega-CD game in October, *Dune*.

Keeping to the storyline of the David Lynch-directed movie, you play Paul, son of Duke Leto Atreides. You and your family have been sent to the planet Arrakis, locally known as Dune, to mine for the spice Melange. This spice, created by huge worms, expands consciousness which allows for space travel. The only problems you'll encounter are the evil and very brutal Harkonnens, who monopolise the spice production, and the worms, of course. Paul must prove to the Fremen that he is strong enough to build a military force strong enough to defeat the Harkonnens, whilst also maintaining spice production. The Fremen dream is to establish an ecological life for themselves on this inhospitable planet of sand. The CD will feature all the action from the critically-acclaimed PC game, and will also contain live actors using synchronised speech. It all promises to be one hell of a game...



CODERS IN SPACE

Codemasters, the people who devised the innovative *Micro Machines* and *Dizzy* (which should be out soon), now give you the chance to meet the first alien to visit Earth.

This, hopefully friendly, alien is due to arrive on Earth sometime in November, although he's making a few stops off before he gets here. First on the list will be the planet Linoleum, then a vehicle factory called Detroitica and finally a space-station. When all these places are out of the way, he hopes to reach Earth and take a couple of holiday snaps. That's all he wants – none of this taking over the Earth rubbish – just a couple of photos to prove to his fellow spaceheads that Earth does actually exist.

Codemasters have designed *Cosmic Spacehead* to give a feeling of the Fifties, highly stylising the graphics to give them a distinctive adventure feel to complement the point 'n' click interface. Coders, always in the news it seems, have yet again got their foot in the door with *Spacehead*. In October, Central Television will be devoting a whole programme to cover the development of *Spacehead*. Keep 'em peeled...

More info: Codemasters (0926) 814132

PELE

Accolade

The greatest footballer ever to grace this earth finally makes his appearance in a computer game. The man himself has injected much of his own style into the game, in the hope that it will increase its realism. *Pele* has far more of an international feel than other football games, with the champions of the league playing against the 1962 Brazilian World Cup team. There are the usual options, including variable weather conditions, and you can even play as Pele in a special skills contest. The game boasts a tilted 35° perspective of the pitch, which, according to Accolade, gives a TV feel. In the highly competitive world of football simulations, Accolade at least have the backing of the greatest player in the world.

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cool world

On 24 July 1993, Sega changed the way we will play arcade games. With the unveiling of their mammoth Sega World in Bournemouth, in one fell swoop they have taken arcades from the Seventies to the next century. Dominic Handy cashed in his traveller's cheques for 50 pences to enter the ultimate Sega experience.

The Sega World Family Centre in Bournemouth was opened to the public on 24 July. A week later The Big Breakfast's Chris Evans hosted a celebrity unveiling, where he presented Mega Drives as prizes to winners of various competitions running on machines throughout the centre. Sega World is the biggest of Sega's planned entertainment centres, with 24,000 ft^2 covered by over 200 gamesplaying points. Come to Sega World and you'll always be able to find a machine to play – or just browse through the Sega Shop or munch on a meal at Burger King. Sega have it all here!

The brief from Sega of Japan to Sega Amusements Europe was simple: create arcade centres all around Europe, just like we have in Japan. It was a sign, a word from above that the Japanese bosses at Sega had finally acknowledged that, in gamesplaying terms, Europe had come of age.

The history of arcades in the UK has been grim. Since they first appeared in the Seventies, they have always had the reputation of grimy, smelly, sticky places where you had to play games with one hand on your wallet for security purposes. Most arcades in the UK are still like this, packing as many money-spinning machines into as small a place as possible. It was like that in Japan, too, until the late Eighties when top coin-op manufacturer Sega – who started to get worried about the long-term prospects of arcades after the Japanese parliament laid down stringent rules governing their operation – took these games centres (known as gai-cens in Japan) to a new level.

Sega soon started looking around for new unconventional sites for their arcades. Overnight, Sega changed arcades from dark, dank, dangerous sites to bright, airy, pleasant entertainment centres. Their locations changed from pubs, clubs and back alleys to tourist locations, airports and shopping centres.

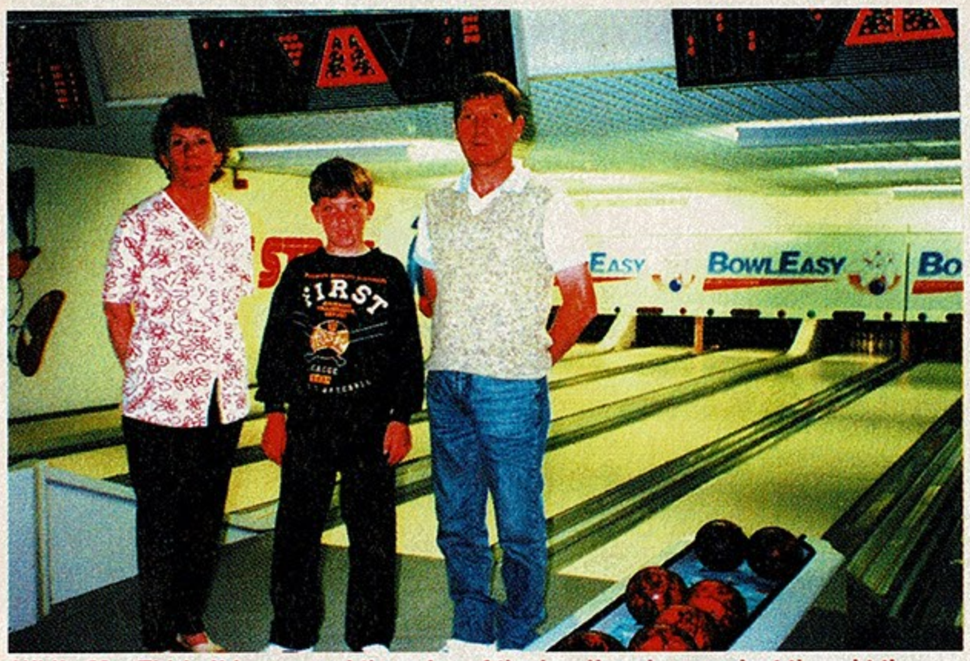
And that's about as much of a brief as Sega Europe had. And that was all they needed. Everyone was insistent that the European centres would not be clones of the Japanese ones, but the same basic principles should be applied. Without further ado, Sega Amusement Europe's George Kieffer, Deputy Chairman, and Malcolm Evans, Operations Director, started looking for suitable sites.

In July 1992 an innocuous story in southern seaside town Bournemouth's local newspaper, the Evening Echo, announced that a company called Sega had received permission to build on the site previously occupied by a local ice rink and car park. Few could imagine that this heralded the start of Sega's onslaught on Europe.

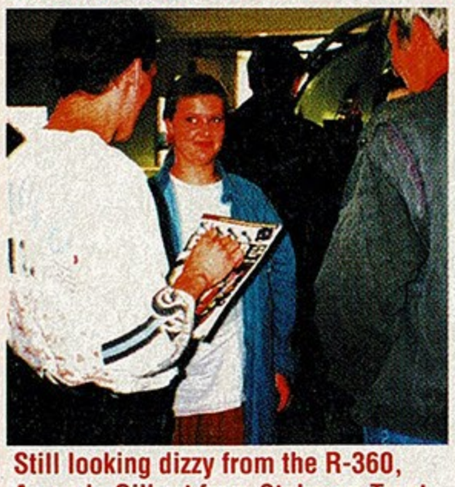
Before they attempted the colossal task of creating Europe's largest arcade arena in Bournemouth, Sega planned a few smaller projects. The first appeared in autumn 1992, in the basement of Hamley's toy shop in London. A small, compact entertainment corner of the store, Sega called this pilot scheme Metropolis. The second centre opened in Marseilles, France, in spring of this year. The arcade there, based in a Virgin Megastore, continued their naming of the arenas calling it SegaFolies (which roughly translated means Sega Madness!). Then, in April of this year, they started on their flagship centre, called, appropriately, Sega World. Here they will unveil every new machine and concept, which ultimately means that if you're fortunate to be able to get to Bournemouth (which we are every day!), you'll be able to experience all the latest arcade machines and virtual reality systems before anyone else in Europe.

Despite being the culmination of over a year's planning, Sega World only took about three months to actually build. That said, the folks that were involved in constructing the place worked their socks off – and we should know, we were down there every day checking on the progress. Sega World was initially hoped to open on 1 July 1993, but due to the usual teething problems encountered at all major theme parks (as Richard Attenborough would say), the public opening was delayed till Saturday 24 July.

Now that Sega have the Bournemouth centre up and running, they optimistically hope to open more all over Europe at the rate of one a month. The next UK centre, a small version in London's Trocadero, should hopefully open this month. Further projects are planned in the UK, but Sega have yet to firm up any venues. "Contracts are just about to be signed," is all Sega's Malcolm Evans would divulge, but he did indicate that it would be a surprising venue. So all we can say is keep 'em peeled as a Sega centre could be opening near you soon.



While Mrs Thirkell bemoaned the price of the bowling, her son just thought the whole centre was "brilliant"! His favourite game was undoubtedly the laserdisc shoot-'em-up *Crime Patrol*. The Thirkell family were on holiday from Darlington.



Still looking dizzy from the R-360, Amanda Gilbert from Stoke-on-Trent described *G-LOC* as "easy"!

Neil O'Donnell (11) of Bournemouth thought Sega World was actually "quite cheap". His personal favourite was the *Motor Frenzy*.

Sega insist it's a family centre, and all ages are welcome. This chap was just one of many more "experienced" players trying out the machines.

the future of entertainment

The Sega World in Bournemouth is just the start of the revolution. By the end of the year, Sega hope to have opened another four amusement centres, ranging from small ones in airports (one is to be slotted into Gatwick soon) to ones almost as big as Sega World. But Sega's plans reach much further into entertainment than plain arcades. By the end of 1996, they plan to have, what they are calling, high-tech mini theme parks, just like Disney. Here they will combine the conventional aspects of all modern-day theme parks, like roller-coaster rides and arcade machines, with innovative new experiments in virtual reality and the like. Sega are determined to be at the forefront of entertainment into the next century.

Sega Amusement Europe's George Kieffer (left) and Malcolm Evans are the dynamic duo responsible for bringing the Sega centres to the Europe.

SEGA WORLD

Much thought has gone into the design of Sega World to make it as varied and inviting as possible. Sega want to encourage all ages, from toddlers to pensioners, to sample the experience. Essentially, they are calling it a family centre, and judging by the visitors so far, it has been a 100% success. The whole 24,000 ft^2 of Sega World is divided into themed zones.

The driving edge

R-360

There are two of these massive rotating simulators in Sega World. Each of them is currently running *G-LOC*, although they can be adapted for different games when, and if, they become available. At £3 a go, though, most folks we spoke to said they had had one go on it, and enjoyed the experience, but wouldn't play it again. This game is so realistic, though, that people have been known to black-out on it.

OUTRUNNERS

That old classic machine *Out Run* is mixed in amongst other racers like *Super Monaco GP* and *Motor Frenzy*. Most of the machines are linked in tandem, so if *Virtua Racing*'s full, these machines will certainly provide another competitive edge.

AS-1

Ever seen one of those Super X simulator machines? Well, they're the latest thing in realism. They sort of look like a minibus without any windows and lay on a hydraulic platform that moves them in all directions. Well Sega have adapted one of those to include a fully interactive flight (or drive) in which the players control their own destiny. Three prototypes are currently being tested in Japan, and this will be the first machine of its type anywhere else in the world. The first unit should be installed in the last week of August, so the MEGA POWER offices will be unmanned in that week...

Zap attack

Grab hold of it for intense realism. Primary games here include the laserdisc games *Mad Dog McCree II* and *Crime Patrol* and wicked fight games like *Title Fight*. The laser games involve tracking down bandits and shooting at the 50-inch screen with your gun. The boxing game (of which there are three machines) requires you to grab hold of handles and literally box with your hands. Also down here you can find all the firm favourites like *After Burner*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Street Fighter II*, *Sonic* (!) and *Premier Soccer*, plus around 70 other machines. There are six 50-inch screen selectable machines, where two players can choose from three different games. As you can see, Sega haven't limited themselves to just their make of machine, you can also find Neo•Geo, Capcom, Midway, etc. In fact, if you've got a favourite coin-op, you can almost guarantee it'll be here! In all there are about 200 machines you can sit down at and play in Sega World.

Sonic Strike

Bowling's a little difficult for beginners and little folks, so Sega have asked their subsidiary Deith Leisure to develop a cutdown version. Sonic Strike consists of eight lanes around 60% the size of normal ten-pin lanes. The balls are also much smaller and don't have any holes. The whole thing is completely computer-controlled, even down to the scoring above each lane. As the Sega literature explains, "minimum fuss, maximum fun". Spot on.

The din bin

Oh dear, how sad. Yep, even the cool surroundings of Sega World couldn't keep the karaoke machines out. For £2 you can enter one of two rooms, select one of over 1000 records and "lay down a track". When you've finished, you can take the momentous occasion away with you on a complimentary video cassette. Fun Unlimited. The unfortunate companions of the sad ones can avert their eyes by playing on the Mega Drive also in the room.

The lowdown

This wasn't up and running when we popped down in the first week of opening, but here Sega hope to uncover some of the mystique behind coin-ops. Coin-op cabinets made from perspex will show you what the innards look like and how they work, while plenty of background info will detail the development of an arcade game. Sega also promise to give visitors a rare glimpse of their Research and Development department.

ToeJam's gang

This is our fave zone. All the top guys are here, including Postman Pat, Noddy, The Magic Roundabout and Fireman Sam. There is also an ultra-destructive game called Cracky Crab, plus simple ones like electronic Noughts and Crosses. You can also use crane grabbers to win fluffy toys (Sega World has *tons* of these machines). This is ideal for the younger members of the family.

Megabyte

Stuff your face in Burger King before going on the R-360. Sega World also has its own toilets, so you need never leave the building.

The Sega Shop

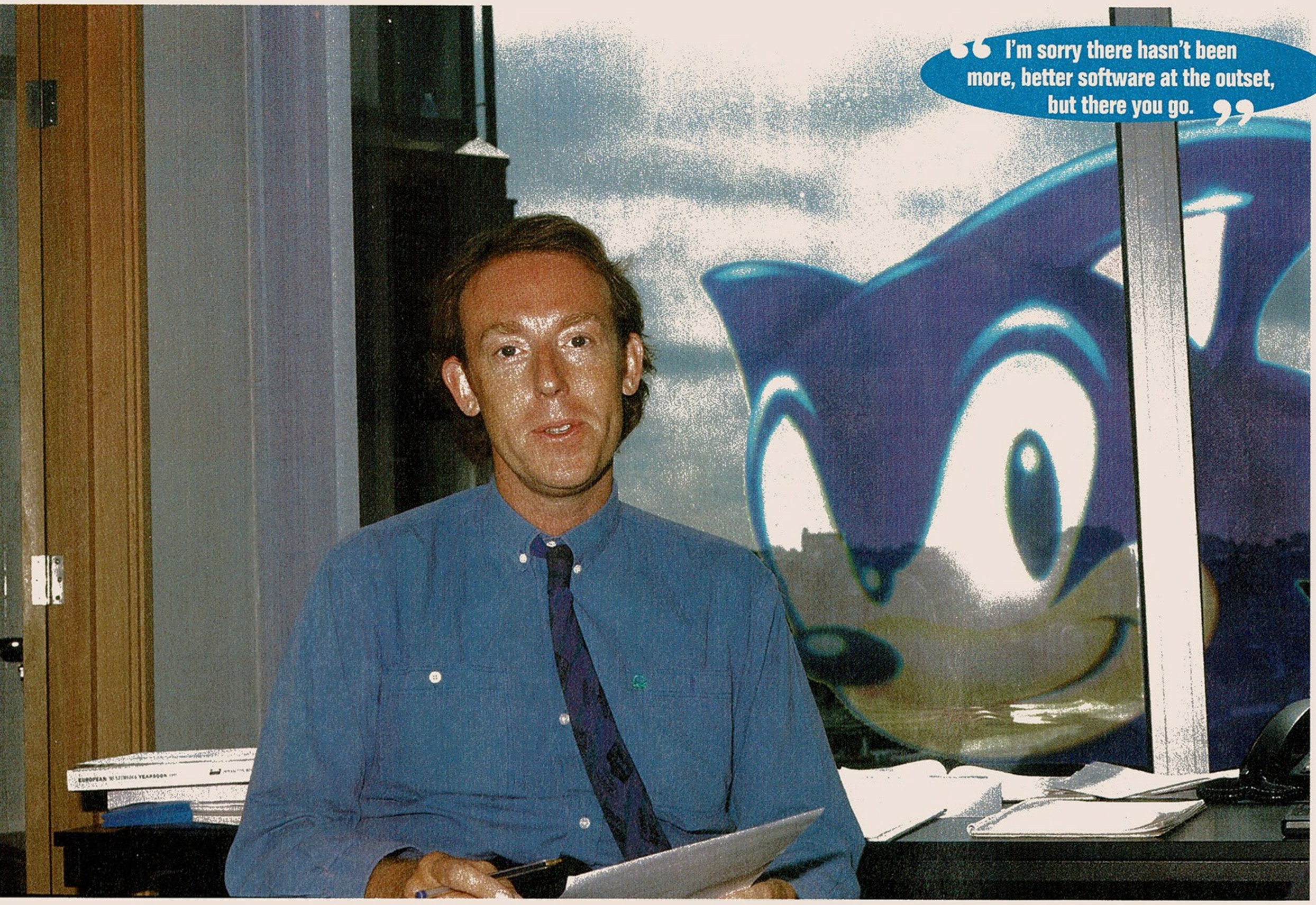
Pick up your favourite Sega goodies, like mugs, T-shirts, Sonic rock, cuddly Sonics and Tails, baseball hats and, of course, all the latest Sega games and hardware, which you can try before you buy. Surprisingly, the shop also has a decent selection of Amiga titles at cheap prices.

VIRTUA RACING

All *Virtua Racing* fans immediately place a coach booking for Bournemouth: the set up in the Sega Word is like nothing else in Europe. First off they have the eight-player *Virtua Racing* linked system, where eight folks all sit in a row and can compete in the same race. Above this two monitors relay information about the race to spectators. At £1 a go, the five punishing laps you get are great value.

Plus, Sega World has another four individual *Virtua Racing* deluxe machines. Also a quid a go, these beasts come complete with adjustable seat, wrestling wheel and inflatable airbags. If you haven't played *Virtua Racing* before, the airbags are in the seat (not the steering wheel!) and inflate to give the feeling of G-force when you zoom into banked corners – and believe it or not, it actually works.

Sega World is currently open from 11:30am to midnight every day of the week. For more information contact Bournemouth Tourist Information Office on (0202) 789789.



alexander the gre

David Graham put on his best pair of jeans, combed his hair, and even had a shower, all for the sake of the Power Interview. We put Nick Alexander under the spotlight this month, Sega Europe's chief honcho – and a man who can lay his hands on any Sega game ever released (lucky git).

If you want to find out just what's happening in the British video games market, and where it's going to be in the next few years, then you need to speak to Nick Alexander, the Chief Executive Officer of Sega Europe. After all, there are currently one and a half million Mega Drives in Britain, and this year – which is expected to be even bigger than 1992 – Sega are looking to sell 75-100% more Mega Drives than they did in 1992. Nick Alexander knows his video gaming onions.

For the boss of a massive, hugely successful company, the casually dressed, affable Alexander doesn't exactly fit the corporate image of a tense, highly-stressed, suited executive, but then Nick has spent a lot of years in the games business. Sega's new London headquarters, however, do fit the bill: an impressive steel and glass affair in Earls Court. And, oh dear, a two-seater *Virtua Racing* cabinet in the foyer, set on free play. Now if only I had arrived an hour too early...

THAT MEGA-CD IN FULL...

Last July, Nick Alexander was adamant that he didn't want to launch the then-ready Mega-CD onto the market without quality software to back it up. In the event, they did launch, so what went wrong?

"The problem of converting the games which have live video in them from NTSC to PAL were much greater than I think anyone had anticipated. So in

fact *Night Trap*, which is the first of those games, has only just been shipped. On something like this, I don't think one can really win. If we had held the launch of the hardware any longer – we'd been sitting on the hardware for about four months already, waiting for the software to arrive – you'd be asking: 'So why was the hardware delayed so long?' It's just one of those things. It didn't work out like we wanted it to; never mind, the software's coming through now."

Although you're not launching it in the rest of Europe until September, how well do you expect the Mega-CD to do this year?
"We're looking this year for around 500,000 pieces in Europe, of which about half will be in the UK [currently there are around 68,000 Mega-CDs in the UK]. It's slightly less than we were initially hoping for because we're going to be far less aggressive on price than we had originally hoped, because the yen is so strong against not just the pound, but the other European currencies as well.

"The yen has appreciated by about 35% in the last nine months, which means that the Mega-CD costs us 35% more than it would have done nine months ago. We at one stage were hoping – perhaps optimistically – for a £199 price point. At the moment with the existing software bundle it's £269. It is not impossible that price will have to go up rather than down. There seems little chance that the yen will weaken... if anything, in the last few days it's been strengthening, but we try to take the long-term view on that."

So now the UK user base stands at 68,000 can we expect to see software coming through a bit faster?
"Software development takes as long as it takes, unaffected by hardware volume sales, unfortunately. Certainly, now there will be not just *Night Trap*, *Sewer Shark* should be available hopefully within about six weeks, and the Make Your Own Music Videos. There are some other quite interesting

When the BCCI bank collapsed last year, Sega Europe soon snapped up their empty offices to collectively house all their arcade and home entertainment departments. The whole of Sega's European strategy is coordinated from these offices in Earls Court, clearly visible from the road. However, you won't be able to see this massive hedgehog anymore; it was temporarily erected late last year to coincide with the launch of *Sonic the Hedgehog 2*.

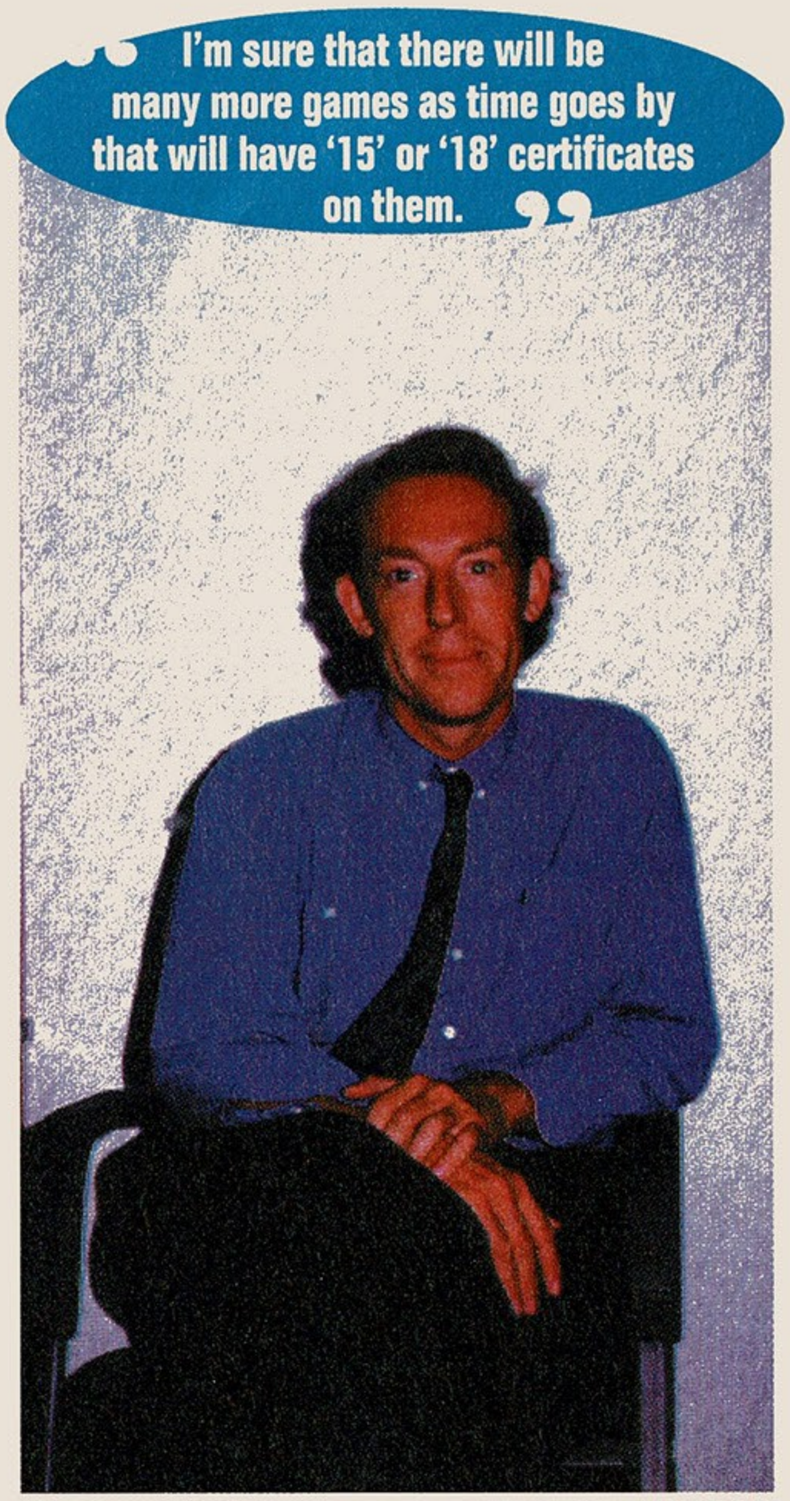
THE PRICE IS... WRONG

What about a price cut on CD games? After all, they're cheap to produce and much of the cost of carts is down to the ROM chip...
"In time, absolutely right. Very, very roughly, a cartridge game costs probably £100,000 to develop. A CD game – I think the budgets will probably go up as time goes by – is probably costing an average £500,000 to develop, so about five times as much [as a cart]. We've sold 70,000 units of hardware [Mega CDs], so a good-selling CD title might do 7,000 or 10,000. If you think about that it means that actually, for that hardware base, the development cost is £50 a unit! That is clearly a loss leader of fairly major proportions, and one hopes that the hardware base will creep up quite rapidly.

"Supposing we get half a million pieces by the end of the year, and then maybe a Mega-CD title that sells really well might do 50,000 pieces. That's still £10 of development costs per title, so what one has is a trade off. The manufacturing costs, absolutely, are much less; probably even with fairly elaborate packaging, it's under £2 per unit, whereas a cartridge costs £10 a unit to manufacture and deliver here.

"So as the volumes that we can sell on Mega-CD games increase, there is absolutely every reason why the price should come down, and I greatly look forward to that. For the time being, though, even selling at £50 a unit, as you can work out for yourself from the development costs having to be spread over those numbers of units, we're not making any money even at that price."

that with any new hardware format – not just Sega formats, any format – the software that's introduced early on looks like nothing compared to what's being produced a couple of years later as programmers get used to working with the new hardware and driving it harder. I think even we're still going to be seeing cartridge games on the



titles coming along for the autumn, and so by Christmas there should be, perhaps, 30 titles, of which ten would be impossible on anything other than the Mega-CD. So I'll feel more comfortable with that situation. I'm sorry there hasn't been more, better software at the outset, but there you go. As I said before – what can you do?"

Those ten games that couldn't be done on anything other than the Mega-CD; are you talking about Full Motion Video (FMV)?
"They wouldn't all be Full Motion Video... for example, *Cobra Command* is a game that pulls cartoon-style graphics off the Mega-CD: that you couldn't do on cartridge, either. And some of them will be using – like *Silpheed* – the rotation and scaling capabilities of the Mega-CD that don't exist in the Mega Drive on its own. These are all products that would not have been possible as cartridge products on the Mega Drive."

A lot of the CD games we've seen so far have been little more than enhanced cartridge games. Can we expect something more from software in the coming months?
"Absolutely. To produce something that uses the full capabilities of the Mega-CD takes time, and I think

alexander the great

> "I think that Sega's machine, as and when it appears, will probably be better than anything that we've heard about so far."

FUTURE FUN

Nintendo have dropped out of the CD race, suggesting that 16-bit technology really can't handle the kind of games they'd like to produce. Is the Mega-CD really capable of taking players to that "Next Level"?

"I think yes, absolutely it is. I think that starting with games like *Night Trap*, that *is* the next level. There will always be something newer and better, and 32-bit technology will enable things to be done that simply would not be possible with 16-bit. But it's also going to be quite expensive, and I think that the most realistic projections for a 32-bit console price point – one that can actually do all these things – is probably about £500.

"Now Commodore have just announced their 32-bit console at £299, but from what I understand, you need to buy some sort of plug-in module or extra bit to make it run video, which is going to cost another £200, so we're back at £500. There will be some people who will be willing and able to splash out £500 on one of these wonderful pieces of kit, but that's not a mass market, and it will probably be three years away before you can get a Full Motion Video 32-bit console for, say, £300.

"And at that sort of price, I think it could be a mass market product. In the intervening three years, we will be able to do a tremendous amount with the Mega-CD. All technology is just an interval before you get to the next piece of technology, and if one was, as a consumer, concerned about never investing in any consumer electronics that were going to be outmoded, you would never buy anything! Because there'll always be something that's bigger and better along in another year or two: that's the very nature of technology. So I think the Mega-CD will greatly enhance the possibilities of 16-bit gaming, and indeed it will probably look an awful lot better than the first things that are done on 32-bit until programmers get to know how to use that technology properly.

Mega Drive that will be amazing compared with what went before, and that's something [Mega Drive] that's been around for four years, now.

"So programming skills are continually improving on any piece of hardware, and obviously will get better and better. I think that there were maybe some unrealistic expectations about what the first Mega-CD games would be like; I think that the games with real video in them, for people who aren't familiar with the technology, they're completely stunned by this... and maybe those of us who are very close to the forefront of the business tend to get a bit blasé about some of that. But it's pretty amazing, and the stuff that's coming through now is really quite impressive, but it will be nothing compared with what we'll be selling in a year's time."

PLANET OF THE 32-BIT

So can you confirm rumours that Sega of America have a 32-bit console dubbed "Saturn" in prototype form?

"No, I can't confirm that. I can confirm that Sega's R&D [Research and Development department] is working on a 32-bit machine. What the final specification for that will be, what its availability will be, what its pricing will be are all questions that have not yet been answered. It certainly isn't a product that could be launched for at least another year, because we're not at those stages yet."

Even if it was desirable for it to appear in a year's time, given the Mega CD's recent launch...

"That's a question that will need to be looked at as and when. I think that the likely price points of 32-bit will mean that the volumes initially [the number of consoles sold] will be very low, but equally, it won't have any impact on the 16-bit market. I think that if we found that it was going to cost £700, we'd probably decide not to bother and to wait until the inherent technology costs had come down at least to get it to something more like £500. But again, we're not quite at that yet to be able to make those decisions."

THE COMPETITION

Are you concerned that Nintendo could, now they've scrapped CD peripherals, leap onto the market with a 32-bit console to steal Sega's fire?

"Nintendo, indeed Peter Main [Nintendo of America's marketing vice president] was saying in CTW [the computer trade paper] last week that Nintendo are not an R&D company. Nintendo, really, are a very smart sales and marketing organisation. And so the whole way that they operate is different from Sega, which is very much an R&D-led company in Japan. Indeed, R&D is Sega Japan's key skill, and they still invest something like 9% of sales in it; they have I don't know how many thousand people working in R&D.

"Our understanding is that the only way Nintendo would be able to launch a 32-bit machine is if they buy into somebody else's technology, and there have been all sorts of rumours – whether any of them have any truth or not, I really don't know – but there have been rumours about Nintendo trying to possibly acquire Commodore or Atari to gain access to their technology. Their original strategy was to try and do something with Sony, which ended in a rather confusing situation... who knows what the real inside story of that was?

"And so they don't have extensive R&D resources, the only way they would be able to launch a 32-bit machine, as far as we can see, is if they take over someone else's. And I think that Sega's machine, as and when it appears, will probably be better than anything that we've heard about so far, so it doesn't really concern me. I think that if they do go to 32-bit, that we're certainly able to match or out-perform them, and we'll be ready when it happens. But I think that they are somewhat concerned about their strategy on this, and whereas Sega is working on a 32-bit machine that it can sort of pull-out as and when, Nintendo aren't, and really don't know quite where to go for one."

> "I think that the DSP chip, like the FX chip, enables you to do more with existing cartridge-based games and with 16-bit technology."

SEGA IN TOYLAND

When will we see the Mega Drive 2 and Mega-CD 2?

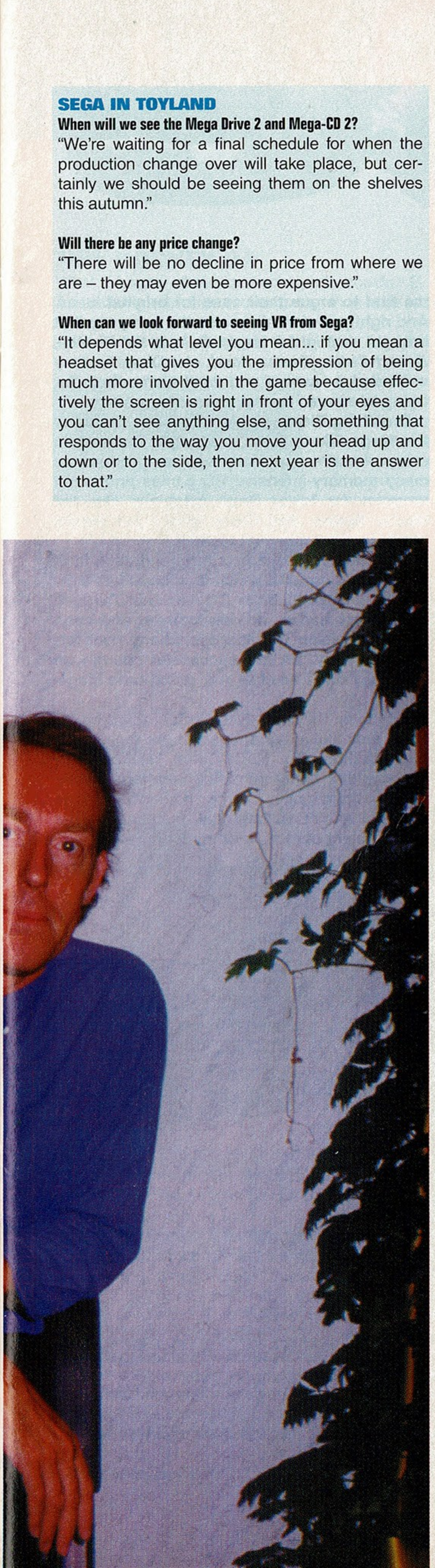
"We're waiting for a final schedule for when the production change over will take place, but certainly we should be seeing them on the shelves this autumn."

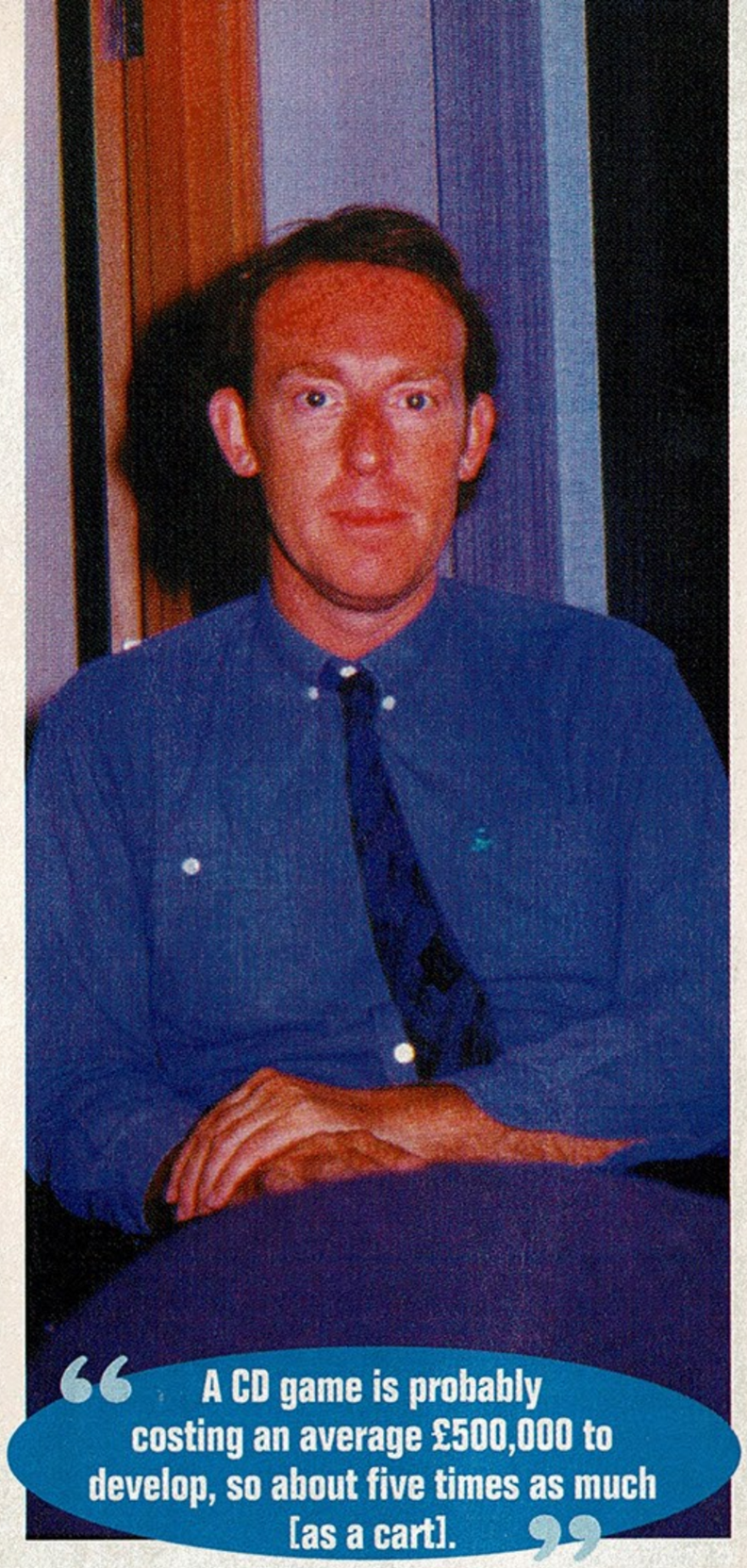
Will there be any price change?

"There will be no decline in price from where we are – they may even be more expensive."

When can we look forward to seeing VR from Sega?

"It depends what level you mean... if you mean a headset that gives you the impression of being much more involved in the game because effectively the screen is right in front of your eyes and you can't see anything else, and something that responds to the way you move your head up and down or to the side, then next year is the answer to that."





"A CD game is probably costing an average £500,000 to develop, so about five times as much [as a cart]."

CHIPS WITH EVERYTHING

Now that Sega have their own DSP (Super FX-type) chip, which you'll be using in *Virtua Racing*, can we expect more carts with coprocessors?

"Yes, absolutely. I think that the DSP chip, like the FX chip, enables you to do more with the existing cartridge-based games and with 16-bit technology. However, it carries a fairly hefty cost premium, so DSP and Super FX games are going to be expensive, even compared with the games we have at the moment, which are not exactly cheap. So yes, there will be more, but they will be high price games."

Yes, but we're not talking Neo•Geo prices, are we?

[Laughs.] "No, not quite. I mean, you could quite easily be, if you're looking at a 24-meg game, with a DSP or Super FX chip, and battery back-up, you know, you could easily be looking at £100 for the price of a game. And I think there really is limited consumer demand at those price points, so... it's very much to my regret that actually what the consumers want are bigger and better games that require bigger and more expensive chips, because it does drive the retail prices up, and that *isn't* what consumers want! But, as we were saying earlier, ultimately, CD will provide the answer to that, but in the interim, we're looking at some very expensive games."

Are you surprised that Nintendo have dropped out of the CD race?

"I think that they were banking on the joint activity with Sony to enable them to achieve that. That didn't work out, and so I think that it's left them with a bit of a hole and they're trying to make the best of a bad job by talking 16-bit technology down. [He laughs.] And probably if I was in their situation, I'd do the same!"

VIOLENCE BREEDS VIOLENCE

Given the Press coverage of *Night Trap*, what's Sega's current policy on game violence?

"The law is very clear on all of this. Video games are covered under the Video Recordings Act, 1984, specifically. But they are excluded from needing classification by the British Board of Film Control (BBFC)... They're excluded from needing classification unless they do one of several things, and the main relevant thing here is if they show realistic depictions of human beings or animals in an excessively violent situation: so that's the law. There was a view amongst some people – which actually we didn't really share – that *Night Trap* contained scenes that could be classified as being excessively violent and certainly the depiction of human beings is realistic. I would agree with the second bit, so we felt that the prudent thing to do was to submit *Night Trap* to the BBFC to see what certificate they gave it. They gave it a '15', which means it cannot be purchased legally by anyone under the age of 15.

"Since the Mega-CD is really a piece of kit that's aimed at primarily 18+, because there aren't many under-18s that can afford it, that was no problem for us... and in some ways it's something that I welcome, because I think it would be a big mistake if every game we produced had to be suitable for four-year-olds.

"We will work within the bounds that society decides are appropriate on the level of both sex and violence in home entertainment, and I think that in reality, we work well within those bounds... But we will be making games that aren't suitable for everyone, and if there are games that we think should be submitted for classification, if in doubt, we'll submit them. So I'm sure that there will be many more games as time goes by that will have '15' or '18' certificates on them. I think that that's a very natural development for the industry and actually a very healthy one."

"I can confirm that Sega's R&D is working on a 32-bit machine."

So wouldn't *Mortal Kombat* fall into the first category of accurate human depictions?

"I think that our view, and I suspect the BBFC's view, would be that they're not realistic depictions of human beings. That they are clearly cartoon-style graphics with people with huge bodies and great muscles and that it is comic book stuff. Their view on other fighting games we showed them – *Mortal Kombat* isn't our game – was that this was clearly not realistic depictions; it's like Tom & Jerry violence, you know. This is not something that they're concerned about."

Even though *MK* uses digitised graphics?

"I think that digitisation makes a grey line, and the better digitised or more humanistic that becomes, the more likely it is to be caught by the exclusion. And so I'm sure that there will be digitised games that will require classification. Our belief on *Mortal Kombat* is that it won't, but again, it's Acclaim's product, not ours."

Jaguar

Where do you start? Firstly and most importantly, Electronic Arts are the biggest producer of Sega computer games – next to Sega, of course. They were the first third-party company to produce their own carts, and the first to sign a deal with Sega whereby EA could release what they wanted when the wanted. They were the first third-party manufacturer to release a 16Mbit cart (*Jungle Strike*). Yet they still haven't broken away from Sega's distribution channels – despite thoughts of going it alone last year.

Ironically, when it comes to sports sims (for which EA are most renowned) Sega have always been at their throats. When EA released *Bulls vs Lakers*, along came Sega with *Dave Robinson's*. Following the release of *EA Hockey*, Sega slipped out *Mario Lemieux Hockey*. Then along came *John Madden*, and who should Sega come up with but *Joe Montana*. Sega release *Ultimate Soccer* next month, and two months later we'll be seeing *EA Soccer*.

And what about the EASN (EA Sports Network)? Sega had their equivalent, the SSN (Sega Sports Network). EA have now changed theirs, though, to avoid confusion with the TV channel, ESPN. But despite this, EA would be the first to argue their case for original ideas. And rightly so, for this is also the company that brought us *Might & Magic, Rolo to the Rescue, Desert Strike, James Pond*, etc. Okay, so they sequelled a few, but you can't blame them for trying to earn an honest crust, can you?

One thing Electronic Arts haven't got into is the Mega-CD. Initially, this might be hard to comprehend – especially as they produce so many memory-intensive PC games and won't program for lower Sega machines like the Master System and Game Gear – but there's old financial reckoning behind it.

You see, Electronic Arts have shares in 3D0, a CD-based console which they hope will blow away any other 32-bit or CD machine. They are inextricably tied to its development and can't be seen helping the success of any rival formats. Anyway, EA are successful enough on cart; they don't need to risk going onto Mega-CD.

Whatever they do over Christmas, EA certainly look like making a packet. As they unveil their forthcoming Mega Drive releases, it's obvious that the Mega Drive is where EA are making their money at the moment and they certainly aren't pulling any punches in the development of their up-coming games.

EA SPORTS SOCCER

Being the masters at sports simulations you'd think that EA would have produced a game simulating the world's most popular spectator sport, football. Of course, the reasons behind this are simple: 1) EA are an American company and have concentrated on simulating American sports, and 2) Soccer isn't the Japs' favourite sport, so sales can't be guaranteed there. But both these truths have now changed with the explosion of soccer in America to tie-in with World Cup 94, and the setting up of the Japanese football league with Lineker, Zico et al.

Created by an all-British team, EA are hoping that *Sports Soccer* will add a new dimension to football games. The view is the oddest thing about the game, a sort of picture from a TV camera on the halfway line. Gameplay is still being tweaked – especially the all-important controls – but the most impressive factor at the moment is the sound. The crowds are totally responsive to the action on the pitch, with the volume increasing as the action hots up.

As with all EA Sports games, EA have packed in loads of options to enhance the realism. You can choose from over 40 international teams, work out your formation, select strengths and weaknesses of individual players and combine strategies and tactics to obtain successful results.

Being launched in December, this four-player extravaganza has all the promise of another huge hit for EA. With their reputation for being the king of sports sims, you expect it!

Street date: December 1993

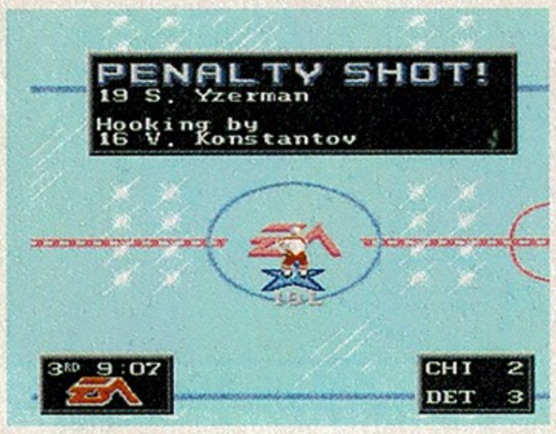
gers

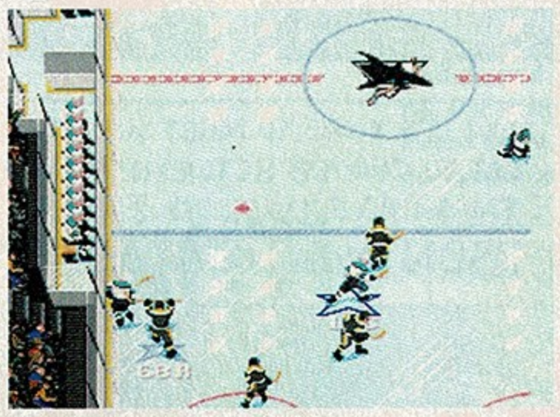
Electronic Arts have produced the odd decent game, haven't they? So why, oh why, we constantly ask ourselves, do they insist on sequelling everything that becomes successful? MEGA POWER was suitably stunned as EA unveiled their surprisingly original autumn releases.

NHL HOCKEY 94

What EA know about ice hockey, you couldn't fit into an ice rink. And with their third ice hockey game, they hope to educate us even further.

While the previous game tied in with the NHLPA (the hockey players' association), this is officially licensed from the actual hockey league. The only real omissions because of this licence are the fight sequences (which always were rather annoying) and bloody injuries because the real NHL is currently trying to clean up its act.



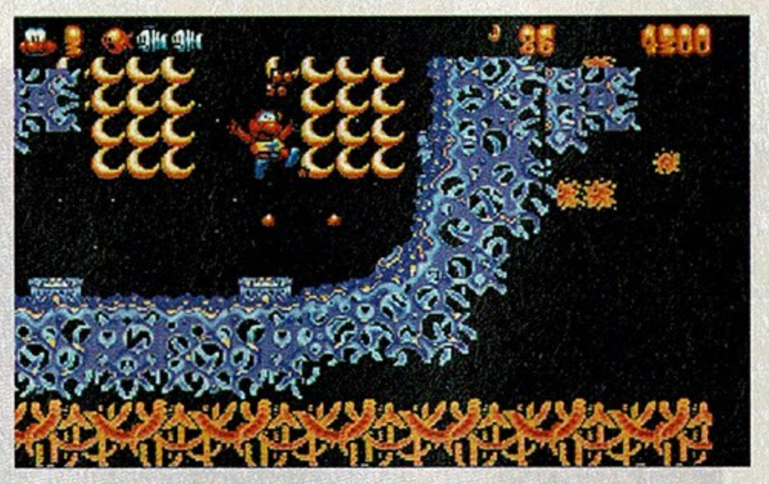


Of course *Hockey 94* utilises the Four-Way Play, EA's innovative new adaptor for multi-player action, but the whole gameplay engine has also been upgraded in line with *College Football* and *Sports Soccer*.

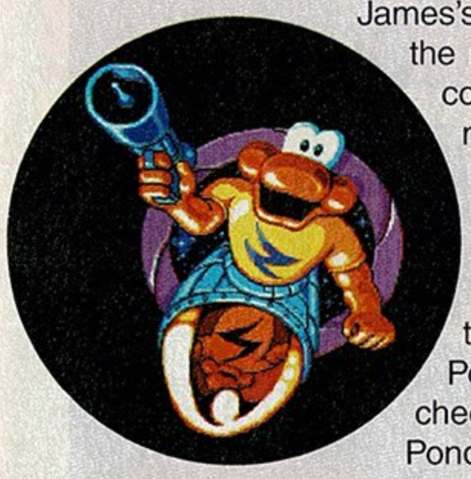
New features include a manual goalie, volley shots, penalty shots and improved crowd animation. The sound has also been pepped up to include 70 digitised organ tunes direct from an approved NHL organist. Yet again, EA have changed the gameplay from the previous game, so all you *EA* and *NHLPA Hockey* fans will have to start all over again.

Street date: September 1993

JAMES POND 3 OPERATION STARFISH



Despite *Aquatic Games* being the third game to actually feature James Pond, *Operation Starfish* is James's third mission, hence the numerology. Also worth counting is the number of megabits, yep, 16, the biggest Pond yet!



Dr Maybe, being the crazed lunatic that he is, has tapped into the moon's supply of rich minerals. He plans to monopolise the Earth's dairy market by mining yoghurts, ice-cream and cheese. The only fish that can deal with an assignment of this magnitude is James Pond. Join Pond as he has to rescue three trapped agents, then make his way to the cheese mines for the ultimate showdown with Dr Maybe.

Pond's getting a bit long in the tooth, so FI5H have assigned him a young trainee to assist him on his adventure called Finnius Frog. Q's been hard at work too, with new gadgets like suction boots, a fruit suit, skis, rocket boots and anti-gravity boots all at James's disposal. To quote EA, *Operation Starfish* consists of "over 100 levels of cheesy, cosmic capers". Nuff said...

Street date: October 1993

BLADES OF VENGEANCE

Set in caves, forests and fortresses of a faraway world, *Blades of Vengeance* is the latest battle game from EA, following in the diverse footsteps of *TechnoClash* and *General Chaos*.

You can choose from three fighters – a warrior, huntress and sorcerer – to defeat the evil Shadowlord. They will have to tackle vampires, zombies and even Medusa in their quest for this dark beast. There are numerous spells which can be used on the dark one's assailants. Within the seven vast levels you'll encounter centaurs, spiders and even a sea turtle, so the bag of tricks will come in useful.

Clever use of the 24-hour clock means that different monsters will attack at different times of the day, like vampires swooping in at night, so you must plan your quest carefully. Think you're up to it.

Street date: October 1993

SUPER BASEBALL 2020

Baseball is America's favourite pastime, so it's surprising that it has taken till now for EA to cotton onto a sim, even if it is futuristic. This is also the first game that EA have converted from the Neo•Geo, so interest will be high as to its success.

Your team can consist of men, women and robots. Each of the 12 teams has their own characteristics, from specialists in hard hitting, fast runners and great fielders. Your aim is to accrue as much money as possible from victories. The more dosh you get, the better the players you can buy to build up your team. Each time a player makes a base, scores a run or forces the end of an inning, he'll earn dollars. Alternatively if you start to lose, this will reduce the amount of money available, and your team will degenerate as you are forced to sell players.

The fielding area around the diamond is covered by special armoured glass to protect the crowd from those home run bullets, and as you walk around you'll have to dodge land mines. As you can see, this is no ordinary baseball sim – the *RBI* series has provided enough of those on the Mega Drive – so it'll be intriguing to see if this 16Mbit cart can deliver the goods.

Street date: September 1993

Here's TOBY! VS. BLIND DATE

EEE CHUCK! IT'S CILLA 'ERE! WELCOME TO ANOTHER MIND-EXPANDING EDITION OF 'BLIND DATE', THE SHOW WHERE RANDOM PAIRS OF BRAIN-DEAD HUMAN PLANKTON TRY TO COP OFF WITH EACH OTHER! SO, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, LET'S MEET THIS WEEK'S THREE LUCKY LADS!

AND CONTESTANT NUMBER ONE IS NICHOLAS WITCHELL, THE BBC NEWSREADER. SO NICKY BOY, WHAT SORT OF GIRLS DO YOU LIKE?

SHORT, SERIOUS ONES.

..WITH BIG KNOCKERS.

CONTESTANT NUMBER TWO, THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME.. HAVE YOU EVER HAD MUCH LUCK WITH WOMEN?

YES.

REALLY?

NO.

AND FINALLY, CONTESTANT NUMBER THREE, TOBY! TELL ME TOBY DEAR, WHAT DOES A GIRL HAVE TO DO TO TURN YOU ON?

CILLA, PLEASE! YOU'RE OLD ENOUGH TO BE MY GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER!

OKAY, NOW IT'S TIME TO MEET THE GIRL WHO'S GOT TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THESE THREE SMASHING FELLAS.. IT'S PAMELA ANDERSON FROM "BAYWATCH"!!!

OKAY.. MY FIRST QUESTION.. "MOST MEN SEEM TO BE INTERESTED IN MY BODY, NOT MY MIND. ARE LOOKS THAT IMPORTANT TO YOU?"

QUESTION 1 BLAH DE BLAH DE BLOODY BLAH

CHARLIE BROOKER™

WELL PAM, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, AS LONG AS YOU'RE INTELLIGENT AND ARTICULATE, THEN HOW YOU LOOK IS IMMATERIAL.

OH, AND HAVE YOU GOT BIG KNOCKERS?

SEXIST PIG!

RIOT GRRLS!

CONTESTANT NO. 2..

PAMELA, I'M SO DESPERATE, LONELY, AND SAD THAT I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE OR HOW YOU THINK..

..WHICH MEANS I'M JUST YOUR AVERAGE 'BLIND DATE' CONTESTANT, REALLY.

CONTESTANT NO. 3...

WELL PAMMY-PIE, FOR ME, GIRLS ARE LIKE VIDEO GAMES - HOW THEY LOOK ISN'T AS IMPORTANT AS HOW THEY PLAY.

IF SHE DOESN'T PICK ME I'LL HANG MYSELF.

HMM.. OKAY.. QUESTION NO. 2 - "WHERE CAN I FIND GREAT VALUE AND SUPER SAVINGS ON SEGA MEGADRIVE GAMES?"

ON THE MOON?

UNDER THE STAIRS?

AT THE TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD COMPUTER EXCHANGE!

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- ☐ MICRO MACHINES £29!!
- ☐ STREETFIGHTER II (CALL)
- ☐ SHINING FORCE £43.95!!
- ☐ NIGHT TRAP (CD) £43.95!!
- ☐ COOL SPOT £38.95!!
- ☐ F-1 (CALL)
- ☐ ROCKET KNIGHT (CALL)
- ☐ X-MEN £33.95
- ☐ BUBSY £38.95
- ☐ J-LEAGUE SOCCER (CALL)
- ☐ SLIPHEED (CD) (CALL)

THIS IS A TEENY FRACTION OF OUR HUGE AND VARIED STOCK! CALL US NOW ON 071 388 2613 TO FIND OUT ABOUT NEW TITLES AND 2ND HAND BARGAINS!

ENCLOSE YOUR NAME + ADDRESS AND A CHEQUE/P.O. PAYABLE TO 'TCR COMPUTERS'. ALL PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE + AVAILABILITY. TRADE ENQ'S WELCOME. OK?

SO PAM ME LOVE, HAVE YOU REACHED A DECISION YET?

YES!

THESE BLOKES SOUND LIKE GITS, SO I'M PICKING YOU, CILLA!

KISS ME, YOU BIG SCOUSE SAUCEPOT YOU!

EEEH CHUCK! I'M GOING WEAK AT THE KNEES!

CALL INTO OUR RETAIL SHOP IN LONDON'S GLITZY WEST END! 143 WHITFIELD ST. (NR. WARREN ST. TUBE.) LONDON W1P 5RY! OPEN 7 DAYS

MEGA POWER

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the review

Instead of blathering on for thousands of words explaining every single element in the game, we give you pictures instead. After all, a picture tells a thousand words, and with the amount of pictures we use, you'll be getting the equivalent of a magazine's worth of text for every review. Beneath each picture, we tell you exactly what's going on and what we think about it.

Out of ten, here's the rating we gave it.

If all you want to know is what we think about the game, this is where you should start. Each of us has our own gaming likes and dislikes, and it's here we can let rip. Our strict reviewing policy means every one of us must justify our opinion to the others.

Mega Drive or Mega-CD. Look here first to see if it's on your machine.

One picture in each review will have numbers scattered over it. Using these, we can go even more in-depth explaining elements of the game. Each number corresponds to a numbered caption near the picture.

A bit of background to familiarise yourself with what sort of game we're reviewing. You're bound to find something here that you didn't already know, so this is the best place to start.

Where applicable, we tell you a bit more about games similar to the one we're reviewing.

No, we won't be pulling some strange facial expression in the hope that you can work it out (that's so Eighties...). Each picture fulfils two purposes: it tells you who's written the comment, and what they thought of the game. Red (hot!) means "I think the game's great". Green (neutral) says "it was fun, but I wouldn't buy it". Finally, the blue (cold) face says "I wouldn't even recommend this to that annoying kid in MacDonald's". Any game with a blue face on it should be approached with trepidation.

We get deep in the pixels of a game and try to convey the action by showing close-ups from the game. Here you could see anything from a series of slamdunks to the demise of General Ortega.

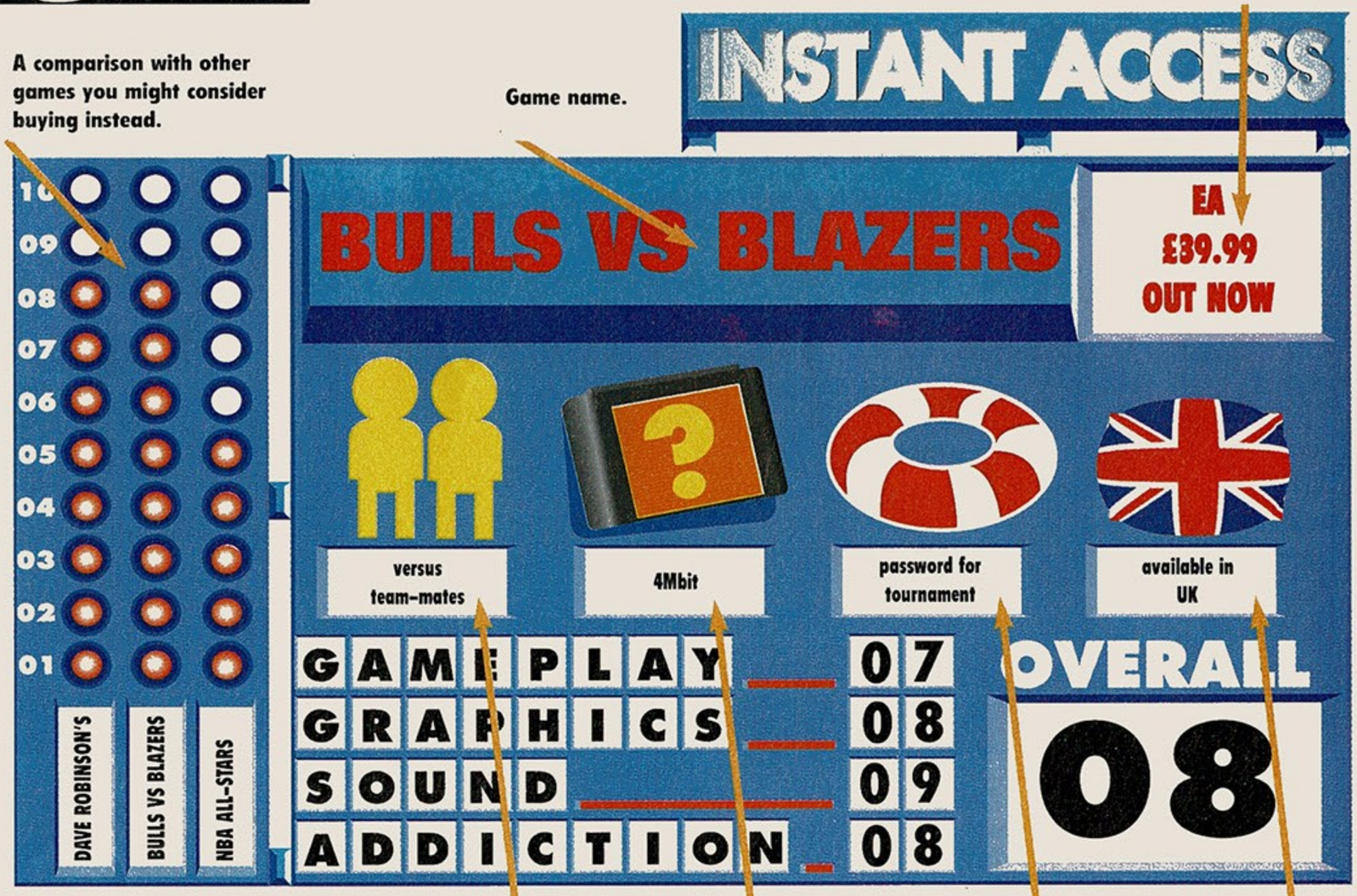
Here we give you the hard facts. Read this and the personal comments to get a quick view of the game.

the ratings

Who it's from, how much it is, and when it's coming out.

A comparison with other games you might consider buying instead.

Game name.



How many players can partake in the action.

How big the cart is (not applicable to CD games).

If there's a save option, how it works and what it saves.

Where in the world it's available.

GAMEPLAY
Takes into account how the game feels. Is it fun to play? Was it difficult to get into? How original is the design?

GRAPHICS
Looks at animation, use of colour, definition, variety and functionality. Ultimately, does it look as good as it should do?

SOUND
Are the tunes and sound effects any good, and, secondly, do they suit the game and build a convincing atmosphere?

ADDICTION
Most games are fun initially, but how long will you be playing it? Is it the sort of game you'd play months after buying it?

OVERALL
- **0-3 –** Don't bother. Serious damage to street-cred.
- **4-5 –** A very risky purchase. Don't blame us if you get a dog.
- **6-8 –** A decent game, but may only be suited to certain players.
- **9-10 –** Everyone will love this. We'd lash out the cash for it.

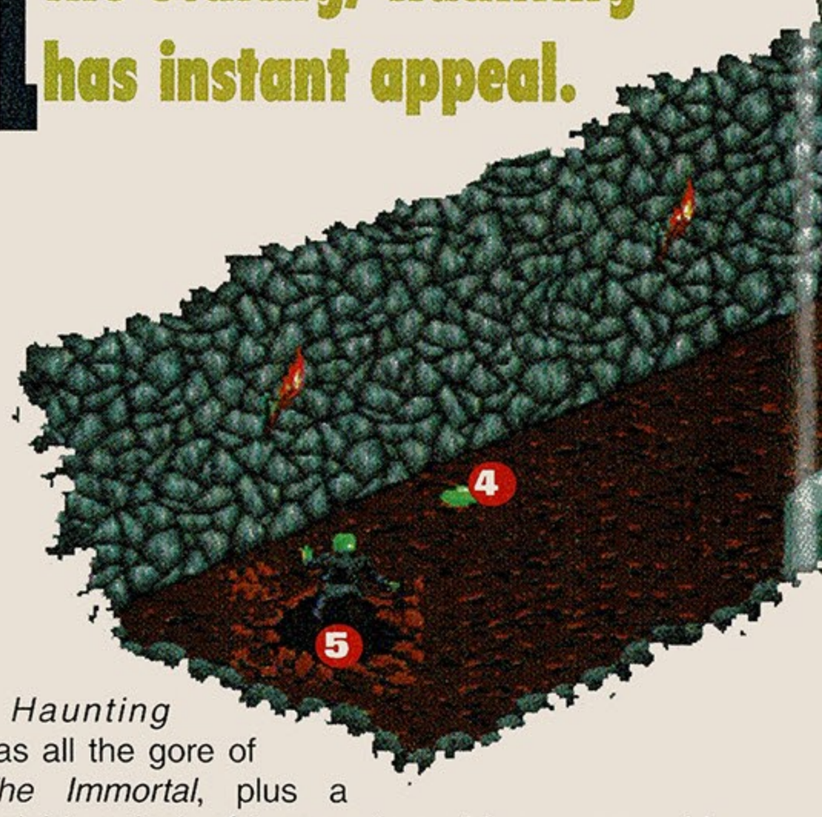
REVIEW

Haunting

You've just been killed and find your killers have inherited your inheritance. Just imagine your ugliest, most annoying cousin getting your Mega Drive! As someone who owns nothing but a stinky old T-shirt, this is something Steve Bough won't have to worry about...

For a company that is renowned for sports games and sequels, Electronic Arts actually have one of the most diverse catalogues of any software company. One much-praised, but often ignored realm they have delved into is that of the horror game. They first shot to prominence in the innovative genre with the colossal *Immortal*, released almost two years ago. Electronic Arts proudly claimed that there were over 40 ways you could bite it in *The Immortal* (you were, quite obviously, not immortal, then!). Mixing horrific graphics (people getting split in half, heads blowing up, etc) with solid, serious adventuring gameplay, EA soon had a chart-topping success on their hands. The queue for the sequel to *The Immortal* starts here, so you can imagine my excitement when *Haunting* arrived though the post.

Due to the brilliant animated sequences of the scaring, Haunting has instant appeal.



Polterguy just waiting to put the willies up Flo, the mother of the house. The picture down the bottom shows Flo's reaction to your scaring – the more jumpy she gets, the better for you. If you jumped into the top of the door, a huge snake would appear and really do the business as Flo is facing that direction. With your ectometer on a safe half, you have plenty of the green stuff left to make sure she goes. Don't waste too much ecto on messing about enjoying yourself, though.

Haunting has all the gore of *The Immortal*, plus a weighty splash of humour to avoid any censorship problems. In fact, the whole game is like a weird, twisted console version of The Evil Dead.

Starring the green corpse of Polterguy, *Haunting* follows the sad tale of how his evil relatives knocked him off and have inherited the vast sums of money and four large houses that he was due. Polterguy now wants to scare them out of house and home, so that they can't enjoy their ill-gotten gains.

The Sardinis – Flo and Vito, and their teenage kids, Mimi and Tony – are the most precocious, ostentatious family you could ever imagine. But their many belongings provide much opportunity for possession, and with over 400 items that Polterguy can use to scare them, they will never know what's going to happen next.

The world of the living may not always be easy going, but in comparison to possessing kettles and mirrors, I'd much rather be alive – and so would Polterguy.

Vito Sardini has just seen something that has sent his fear level soaring to very high. Vito, man, it was only a killer chair – chill out, it's nothing compared to what Polterguy has in store. Polterguy, after that successful scaring, is all prepared to scare the wits out of another defenceless kitchen object as the sparkling chair indicates.

OVERALL 07

This is the overhead map of the house. This view will constantly need referring to as an indication of who is where. Quite often one of the family will vanish whilst you're still there, so check the map to see who the brave ones remaining are.

While the rest of the nation is concerned about violence in videogames, EA have managed to sneak in a bit of soft porn. Here's a scene where Flo drops her knickers in fright!

DOWN IN THE DUNGEONS

1. The walls open up to reveal huge grabbing arms just waiting to ensnare Polterguy. In the caves you must collect ecto, so if you get grabbed you'll lose precious time and some of the green stuff.

2. Coffins throughout the dungeon will suddenly expel loads of bats, which can give you a nasty nip if you get caught. Bats will sap more energy than you can spare, so tread carefully.

3. These barrels contain skeletons that leap out of nowhere. They certainly do the job of scaring Guy and also cause enough damage to wipe out a good chunk of Guy's ecto – nasty boneheads.

4. Ecto, this is what it's all about. Polterguy survives on this stuff; if it's taken away, game over. On this sub-stage you must collect as much ecto as you can in order to possess the Sardinis' belongings.

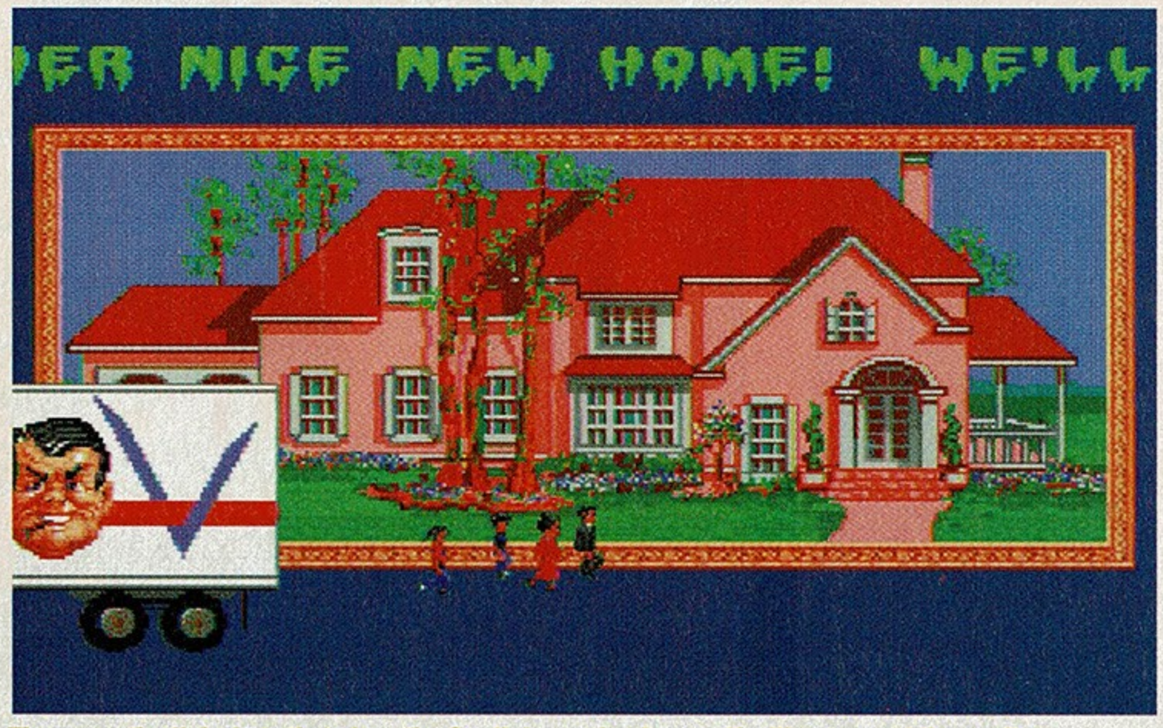
5. This hole in the floor is where Guy appears at the start of the level. Every time you die in the house you'll return to the dungeon to collect more ecto. Once you've got enough, you can reenter the house.

After playing everything else this month, Haunting provided me with just the refreshing and lively game I was looking for. Overflowing with humour, originality and fun, this was a game that soon had the whole MEGA POWER team climbing over themselves for a go.

The animations throughout the game are wicked and the screams of fear from your frightened victims are sadistically satisfying, but as you play you begin to know what all the different objects are going to do if you leap into them and the novelty value wears thin. It's still good fun to make Flo's knickers fall down or Vito do his silly scaredy-cat run out of a room , but I must doubt the game's long-term appeal. Once the surprise element has gone, Haunting loses a huge part of its attraction. Not that the gameplay is shallow, the sub-section where you must re-generate your stores of ectoplasm is fairly challenging, and the use of combinations of shocks and spells in the house takes time to learn. It just all becomes a little repetitive after a while and is, I think, a tad easy too.

I'm sure this game will do very well, despite its ridiculous price tag, as its initial addictiveness is enormous. Try it in a shop and you will be hooked, but that doesn't guarantee it'll last long once you've taken it home...

DAVE



These are the link shots that show the Sardinis moving house. You'll get one of these after completing a level. Vito also appears to own the removal company, which probably means he's using money that was owed to you to do it!

Another shot of the dungeon. After battling through all those beasts, Polterguy is desperately searching for the exit. Just by the bones is a sparkle on the floor over which Guy must pass to open the door in the wall. Secretly Guy's a bit of a mover, and proceeds to do a dance in jubilation that he can go and do some haunting.

While Haunting certainly gains 10 out of 10 for originality, it fails to deliver the goods in long-term appeal. The first time I played it, I didn't really know what the hell I was doing, but still managed to get onto the third level (before Steve crashed the Mega Drive!). This is strange coming from the folks that brought us mighty tasks like The Immortal, Rings of Power and Buck Rogers, but nonetheless inexcusable. 50 quid for a game isn't on the cheap side, and you at least expect some depth and long-lasting appeal. It isn't helped by the fact that the game lacks passwords for each house. Just like Desert Strike, Haunting only has four levels, and in common with that game, it can get very tedious completing levels that you have already proved yourself on.

However, it's not all doom and gloom for poor Polterguy – in fact when I started to play Haunting, I was truly hooked. Due to the brilliant animated sequences of the scaring, Haunting has instant appeal. The sound effects are particularly noteworthy, ranging from eerie creaking to ear-shattering screams. Listening to someone else play Haunting, you can't help but be intrigued as to what's happening.

But at the end of the day, the originality and appeal of Haunting is very short-lived – and you want more than that for £50.

DOM

Tony, the little toe-rag, runs for cover as you jump into the floor and create a pit of fire. The living room (sic) is where you start, and is packed with tons of decent ways to make the Sardinis fill their trousers. For instance, the sofa could start to eat a person, while the rocking chair leaves the floor and floats around the screen. It's all very, very scary.

The Sardinis happily tuck into their evening meal. The next scene from this shows tons of ecto crashing down onto the table, and sees them running off to various parts of the house. This is where the adventure begins.

Yet another shot where the extremely kinky Flo drops 'em for the crowd. I get the impression that she quite fancies Guy, I'd also imagine she's pretty desperate and not being looked after by her man, Vito. Guy has succeeded in scaring the living daylights out of Flo, and consequently her fear level is peaking. Only a few more really good scares and she'll go running off. Beware of your ecto level as it's running pretty low, so if you have extra ecto, use it now.

SARDINIS CLAN

VITO SARDINI

EDUCATION:

MBA IN SLEAZY ECONOMICS, TOTALLY HOSED U.

FLO SARDINI

FAVORITE FOODS:

PASTRIES, CANDY, FRIED FOODS, DIET SODA

MIMI SARDINI

QUOTES:

"WE'RE RICH, AND YOU'RE NOT!",

"OF COURSE I HATE YOU. I HATE EVERYONE".

TONY SARDINI

HEROES:

AL CAPONE, BONNIE AND CLYDE, DAD

After seeing the scumbag family, and witnessing their filthy habits, you really get the incentive to scare them to death. Here we see Vito being frightened by the rug. Guy can disappear into the rugs, and they in turn will become pits of fire, exude monsters or spurt blood everywhere. As soon as the rug scare has worn off you should have prepared a follow-up scare to seal the fate of Vito. Vito is one of the hardest to get rid of so it's advisable that you start off the house by disposing of him first.

Vito is seen here literally jumping out of his skin. Some of the things that happen to the family are totally hilarious. Tony wets himself, Flo faints and Mimi breaks down. Guy is preparing himself for another onslaught on Vito and he deserves it, the scumbag's got Guy's money.

The red letters in the dungeon indicate special powers for Guy. The letter B gives a spell called Boo-Doo, which will enable Guy to throw fireballs at his victim. Other spells in the series include extra-ecto, a total life saver. There's also a zombie spell which allows you to possess the Sardini you're scaring and walk around the house frightening the others.

At first, I thought, not bad but I bet there's no gameplay. But I picked up Haunting and played it, and was soon totally engrossed in the horrific scenario. It's innovative, funny, highly polished and totally original – a rare combination on any console game.

Much time and effort has been spent on the little things. For example, Flo's skirt blows high into the air, and you get a full-on view of her underwear – totally unnecessary, but very funny. In fact in Haunting anything goes! It's always fresh and exciting, with tons of objects to possess and animate.

While the animation and rendering of the sprites is impressive, it is the colour that really brings Haunting to, er, life. The depth and variety of decoration in the rooms is truly stunning, making the whole adventure uncannily realistic.

If you're sick, as I am, of seeing the same old boring rubbish but with different variations, take a look at Haunting – it's certainly different.

STEVE

INSTANT ACCESS

10
09
08
07
06
05
04
03
02
01

THE IMMORTAL | HAUNTING | ADDAMS FAMILY

HAUNTING

EA
£49.99
OUT SEPT

1–2 players | 16 Mbit | no password | available in UK

GAMEPLAY	07
GRAPHICS	08
SOUND	08
ADDICTION	07

OVERALL

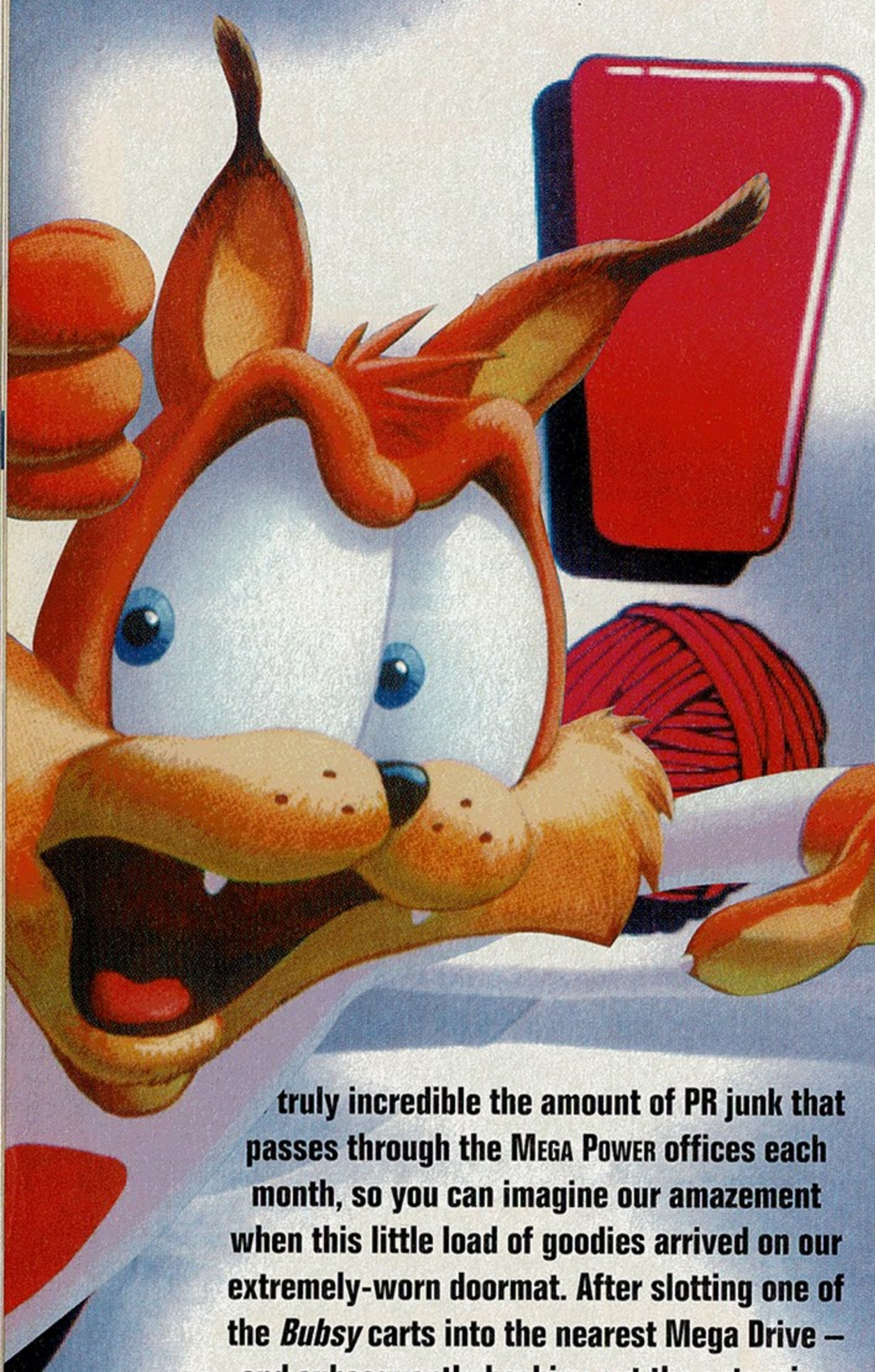
07

five baseball caps

five coach jackets

five t-shirts

five copies of bubsy



It's truly incredible the amount of PR junk that passes through the MEGA POWER offices each month, so you can imagine our amazement when this little load of goodies arrived on our extremely-worn doormat. After slotting one of the *Bubsy* carts into the nearest Mega Drive – and subsequently bashing out the extensive review on page 52 – we soon tried on all the coach jackets for size (purely for photographic purposes, of course) and decided they were of such a high grade that we ought to give them away as competition prizes.

Well here they are, along with tons more Bubsy goodies, and the 8-rated game. Answer this question correctly, and you too could have a cheesy grin as big as Bubsy's if we pick you out of the hat.

Q: What sort of cat is Bubsy?

Send your unfeasibly accurate answer on the back of a postcard to Bubsy competition, MEGA POWER, Durham House, 124 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth BH1 1NF. All entries must be through the cat-flap by 23 September 1993.

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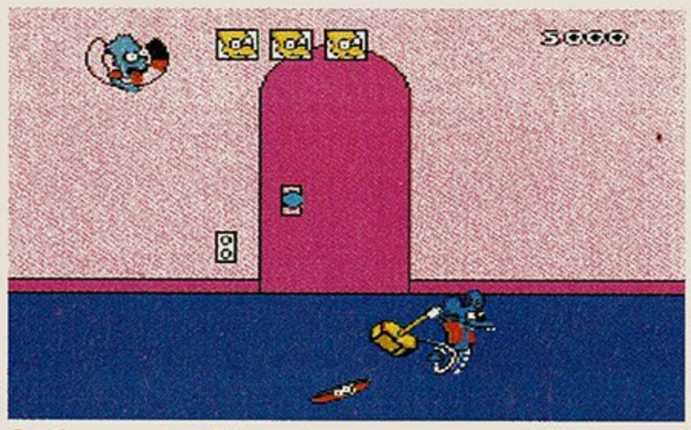
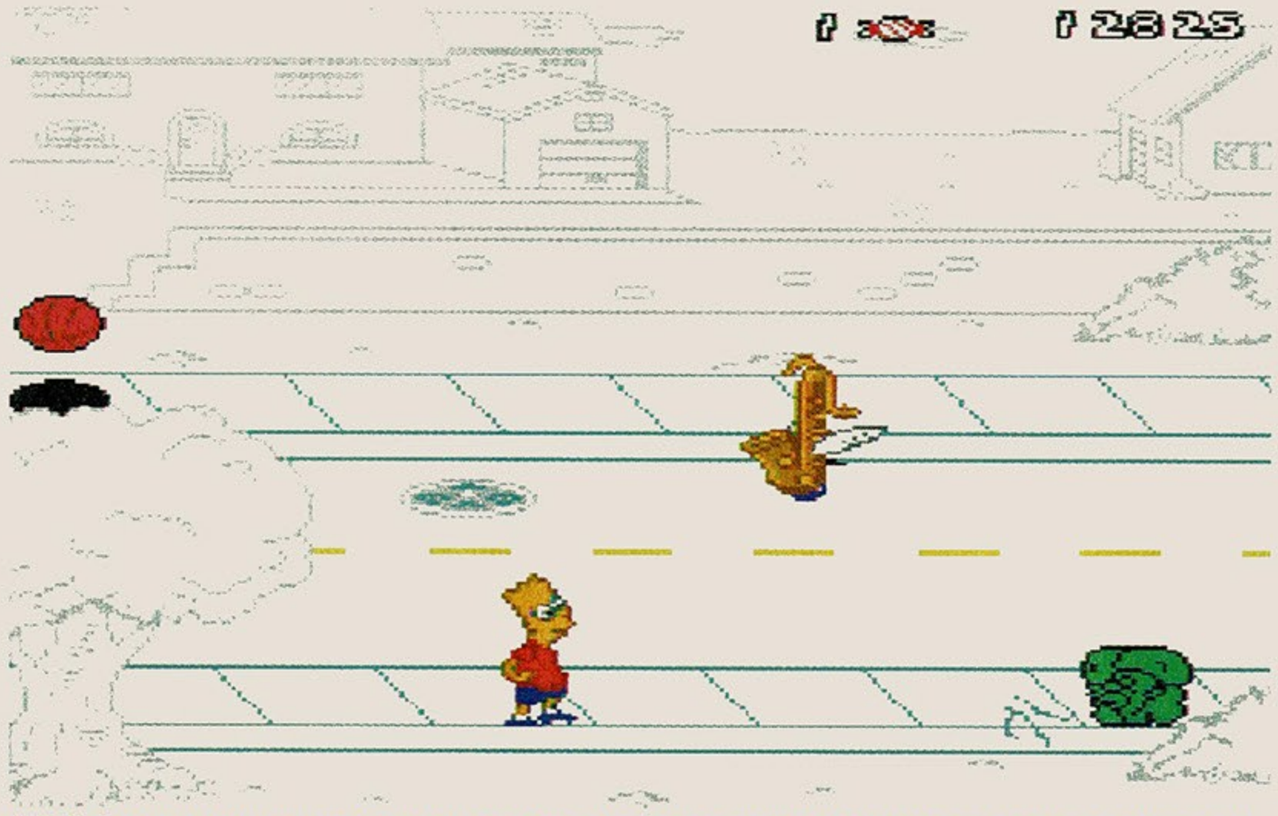
REVIEW



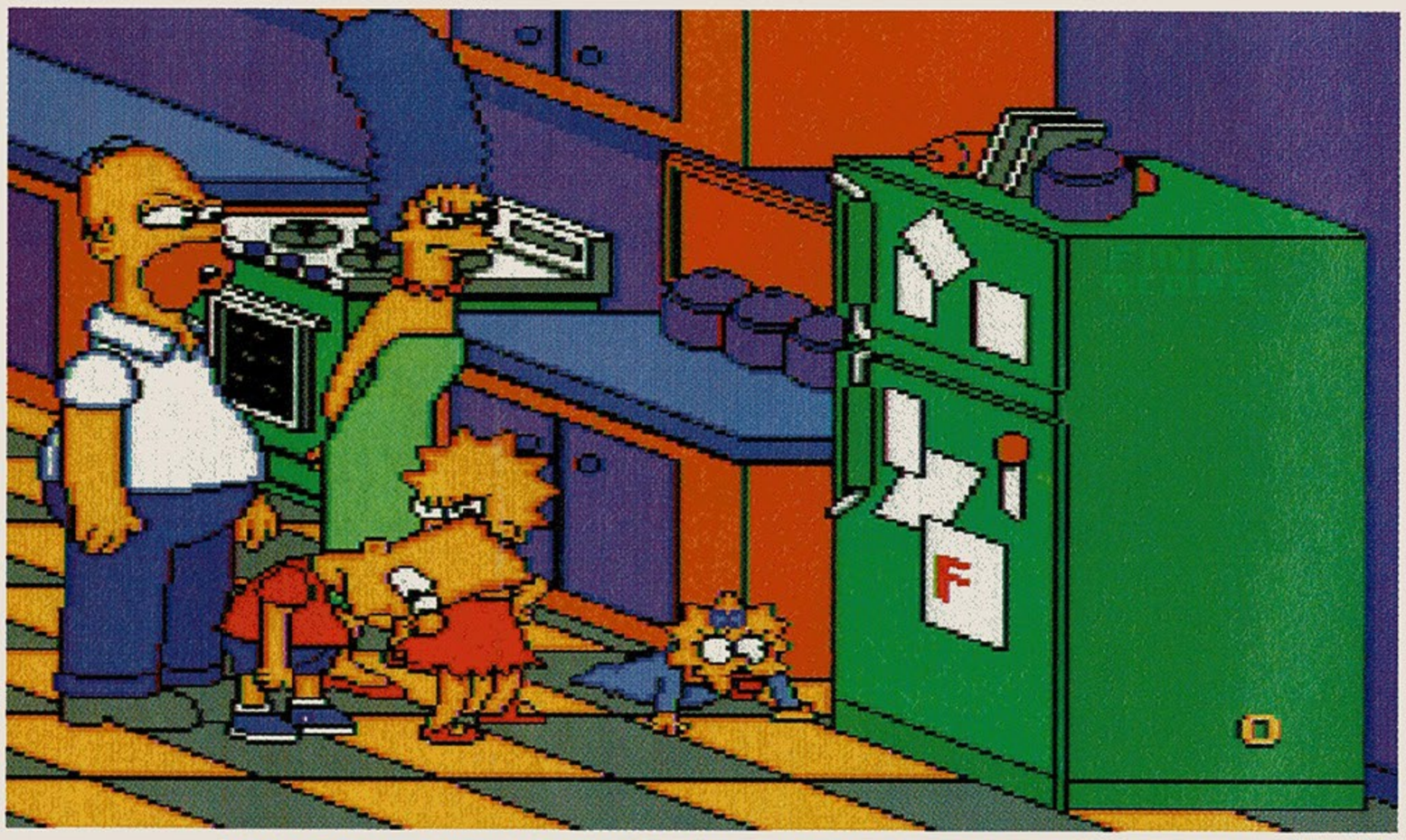
Bart's up against Itchy, a dangerous mouse with a hammer. Luckily for Bart, there's a bigger hammer on the table for him to use. Bash the mouse over the head repeatedly and he'll still come back for more, though.

Bart as Bartzilla. Watch Bart trample the streets whilst being shot at by helicopters and hit by annoying tanks on the floor. Just trample those irritants.



Bart's in Windy World and, judging by the colour of the screen, is just about to be woken from his dream and receive a depressing grade F. The saxophone onscreen will reverse Bart's controls if he hits the notes coming out of it. Jump up to push the sax out of the way. The stone head rolling towards you was chopped off by Bart in a TV episode of The Simpsons and now returns to cause him more grief.

bart Nightmare

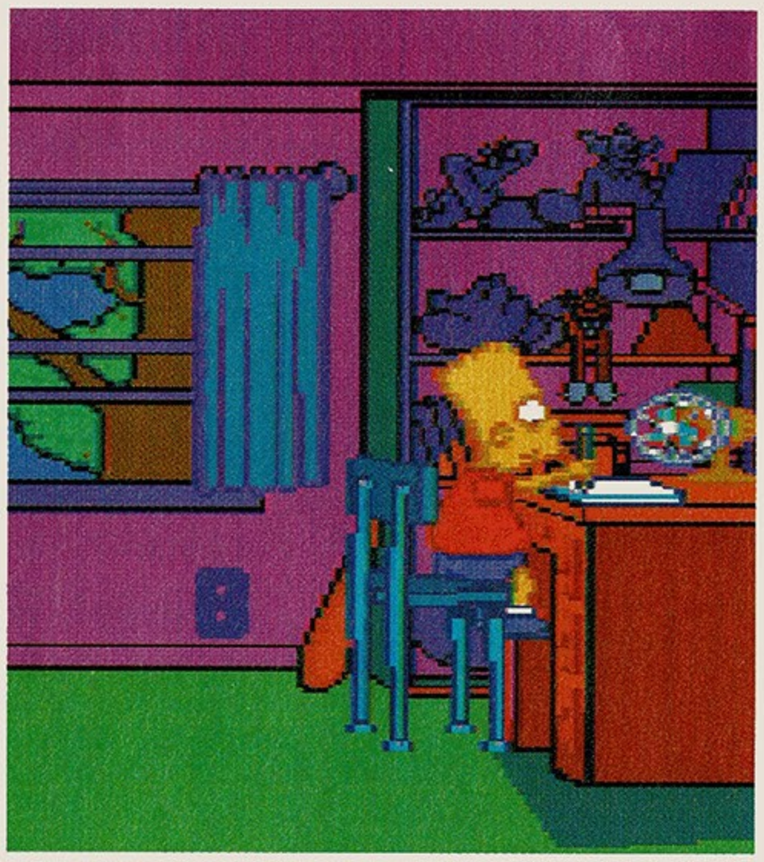


Pathetic! Bart, seen here with Homer and the rest of the family, is suitably disappointed by the feeble grade. An F is the lowest score you can get, an A the highest, but Bart would be content with just a D-. Well, you know the answer, push START and have another go. Surely you can't do worse than that?

It's a bit sad, but now I've sold my satellite dish, I really do miss The Simpsons. Somehow, I was hoping that Bart's Nightmare would go some way to filling the massive void left in my pathetic life, but sadly not. Essentially, there's a severe lack of gameplay here. That's not to say it's a bad conversion – in fact it's almost pixel perfect – but I just can't understand what Super NES owners were so impressed by. Admittedly, the visuals are spot on, but the sound is suspect and the game monotonous. The highlight of the game for me was the jingle sample on the title screen, which doesn't bode well.

Neither of the sub-stages that comprise the game are good enough to exist in their own right, which means you never really enjoy playing it. Hunting down the papers is also a pain, and becomes more of an annoyance than a challenge. Yes, the characters and humour are here, but what good's that if the gameplay was left on the drawing board?

DOM

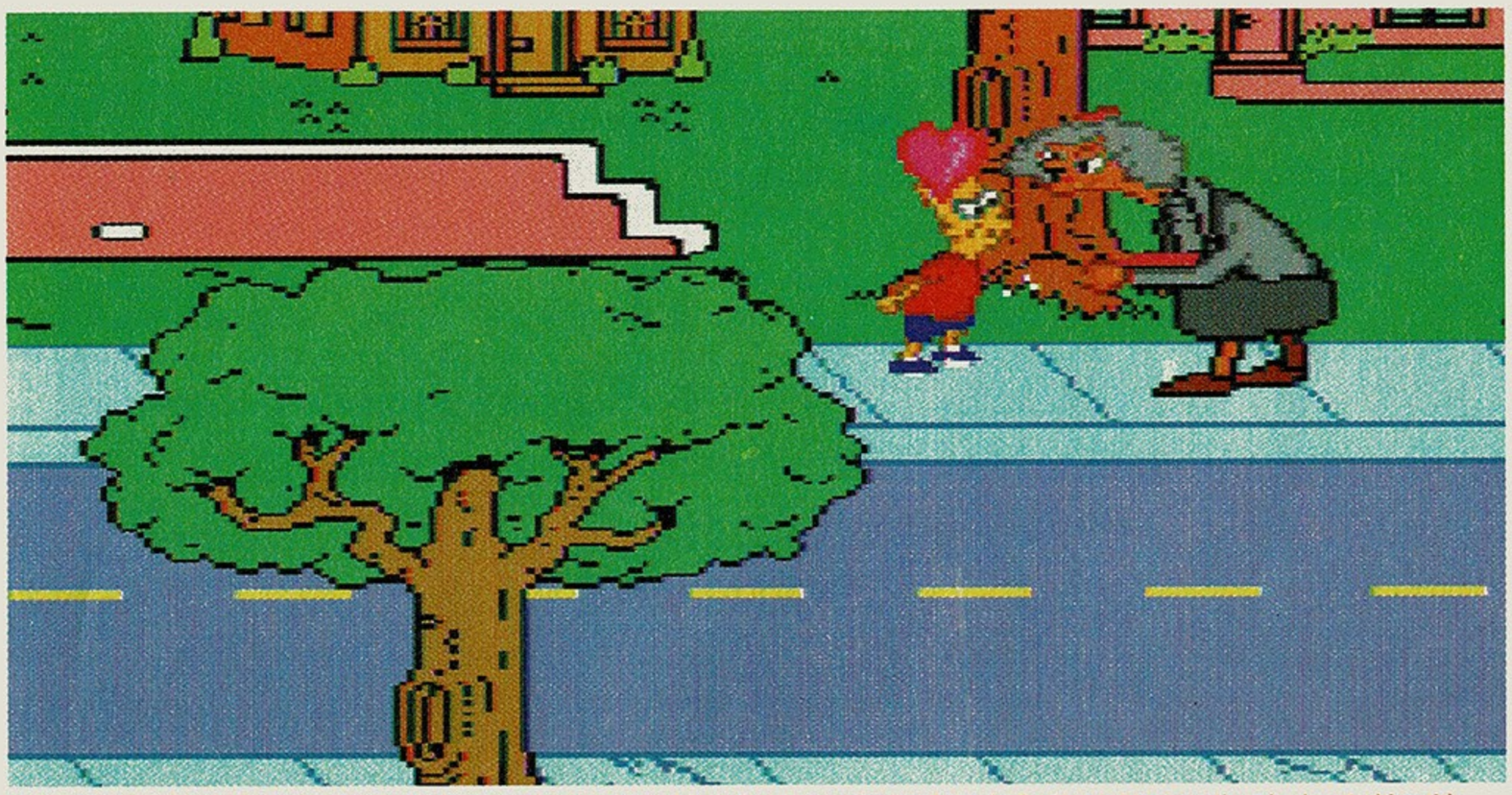


One of the intro screens shows Bart busy at work on his homework. What's up with the lad, he should be out playing football at his age. From here Bart's homework flies out of the window and he has to recover it in his dreams.

Acclaim games are like buses. You wait ages for one to arrive, then along come three in a row. This month we get *Mortal Kombat, The Addams Family* and this follow-up to *Bart's vs the Space Mutants* and *Krusty's Super Fun House, Bart's Nightmare*.

Acclaim have generally adhered to two main criteria when developing console games: 1) Make sure you have a good licence to ensure familiarity with the game; 2) Convert the game to as many formats as possible. Acclaim have already made much money from The Simpsons title, with *Bart vs the World* and *Escape from Camp Deadly* in addition to the aforementioned titles. The family have spread their adventures over all formats, from Ocean's conversions on the Amiga and ST to versions for both the Game Boy and Game Gear. Bart, you could say, has had every marketing drop squeezed from his young body.

Love 'em or hate 'em, you just can't ignore The Simpsons. The Sky TV programme is the top-rated satellite show in Europe – Games World comes a close second. Marketing the show has become a top priority for it producers Twentieth Century Fox, and you definitely can't escape all the tacky, yet humorous, merchandising that has gone along with it.



If Bart happens to turn into a frog, which is very possible as Lisa plays an annoying fairy in Bart's nightmare, then he has to kiss this old cronie. This roaming senior citizen has also developed a full beard, so you can imagine Bart's not too happy. I'm pretty sure this will happen more than once to you, so it may be worth investing in some very dark glasses!

r't's HTmARE

Marge, Homer, Bart, Lisa and Maggie are THE nuclear family of the Nineties. The strange group of designer degenerates welcomed Steve Bough to their clan – he fitted right in – as bleary-eyed Bart explained his sleeping troubles.

In Bart's third outing on the Mega Drive, he must simply complete his homework. Unfortunately, he drops off to sleep – which is where the fun begins. In Bart's dream, he sees pages of homework flying along the street, and must jump on them to collect them. Once he's caught one, Bart gets the choice of two games to play. Finish one of these and he'll win a page of completed homework. Complete the whole thing and Bart will get an A+ to show his parents – although Bart would be happy with a D-!

Homer run

BART VS THE SPACE MUTANTS

Released: July 1992

This was the first game designed around The Simpsons, and originally came out on the 8-bit NES in 1991. *Space Mutants* was released on all the Sega cart formats, and was one of a few arcade adventures that really taxed the player. The game was packed with plenty of in-jokes and characters from The Simpsons show, making it a brilliant purchase for fans of the cartoon. But due to its addictive and encouraging gameplay, it also proved popular with the core of Sega gamesplayers, the arcade addicts. Recommended.

KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE

Released: January 1993

Krusty's Super Fun House was, unfairly, dumped in with all the other *Lemmings* clones that appeared at the time. Admittedly, *Fun House* did involve directing little rodents to a specific point (in this case a crushing machine manned by Bart), but it was brilliantly executed. Bart has to help his clown pal Krusty to rid the Fun House of rats. By controlling Krusty, you had to run around the levels, picking up blocks and coaxing the rats in the right direction. Despite it being a familiar format, this was a very addictive and playable game.

OVERALL

06

Lacking a satellite dish, I've only seen The Simpsons a few times, but I must admit to being a great fan. The sharp humour and sarcasm is great, but I had my doubts whether this could be translated to the Mega Drive. Luckily, the programmers have spent loads of effort making sure every element of the game belies the original humour and appeal. Unluckily, it all seems to have been at the expense of the gameplay.

The characters are so mad, and animated with perfect precision to convince you it's all a cartoon. The various stages within the game are all very varied and packed with side-splitting moments like Bart as Godzilla. On the whole, though, I felt let down by the gameplay. There are a few annoying aspects, like Bart not being able to turn around when confronted with the ballooning foes in the flying stage. It also becomes a frustrating hunt for the papers, not only to catch them, but jump on them before they're blown away.

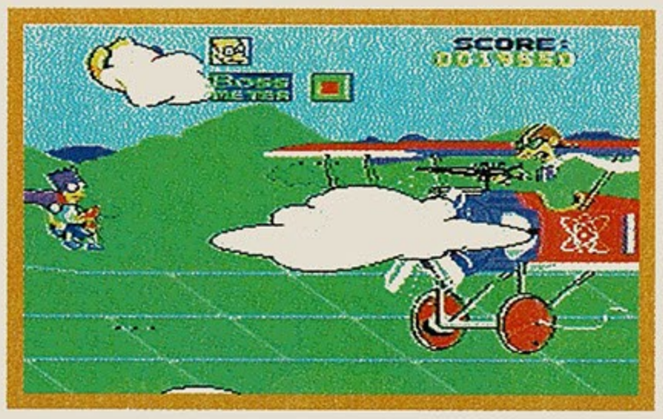
At the end of the day, I still felt my affections were for the characters not the game – which means I'd be better buying the videos instead.

STEVE

The highlight of the game was the jingle on the title screen, which doesn't bode well.

BACK DOOR, MAN

These are the doors of Bart's mind through which he must pass to find his homework. In fact, it's just like that great TV cartoon Mr Benn; just go through the magic door and you'll be in a different world, sir. Now, can I take your coat?



YELLOW DOOR

Bartman

Bartman, complete with catapult and pellets, must wipe out the numerous villains in his way. Only Bartman can save the day. Watch our hero fly through the air with the greatest of ease to meet some of The Simpsons' regulars.

ORANGE DOOR

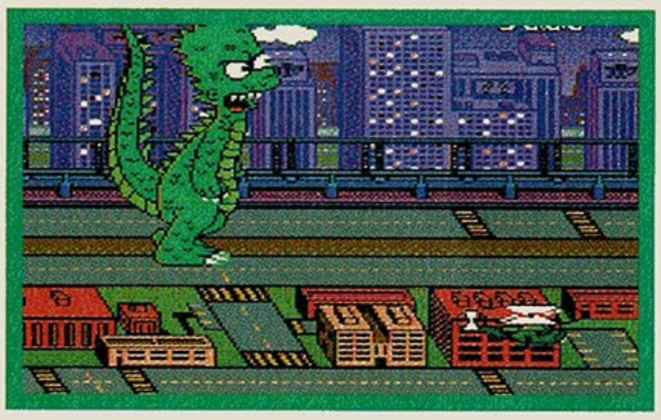
Indiana Bart

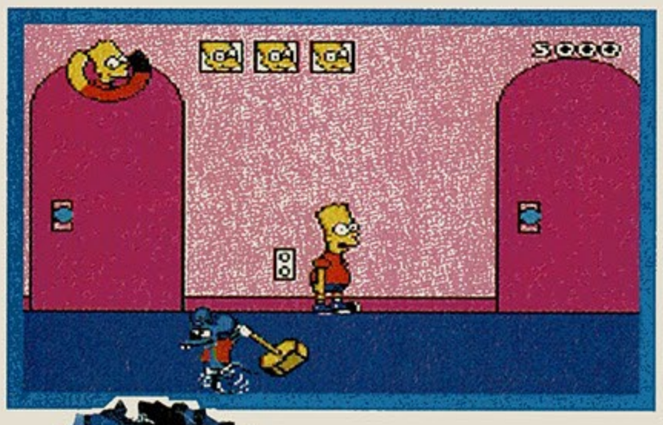
Who else apart from Harrison Ford could play the part of Indiana Jones? Bart in full regalia looks set to take on all challengers, and I can assure you there are plenty. Most importantly don't slip off the boxes or you'll lose a life.

GREEN DOOR

Bartzilla

Distant relation of Godzilla, Bartzilla proves that he can be scary too. Bart will trample the streets and then do a King Kong and scale a tall building – only to be met by Homer?





BLUE DOOR

Itchy and Scratchy

Confronted by killer mice, Bart must think he's on drugs. Your objective is to splat the mice before they splat you. There's not much itching or scratching involved just a great deal of bashing. It's all good fun, though.

PINK DOOR

Infection World

Highly amusing stage which has Bart floating through a hugely psychedelic pool of bizarre creatures. The best bit is that to destroy these creatures you use a bicycle pump to inflate them, then watch them explode all over the place.

It's amazing that no-one has tired of Bart yet. Usually you get a couple of successful games out of a licence then the craze wears off and the characters disappear into obscurity. The Simpsons seem destined to be around for a long time yet, though not with the help of sub-standard games like this.

The overall feel of Bart's Nightmare is one of disjointedness and frustration. The main part of the game, where you search for Bart's missing homework, is a total drag, a bit like eating peas with a cocktail stick. When you do finally get through to the sub games, the feeling of relief soon turns to horror as you never really feel in control of the characters.

The graphics are your basic Simpsonesque cartoon style and perfectly capture the feel of the TV series, but the sound is painfully lacking and would have benefited greatly from a larger use of samples and spot FX.

Bart's Nightmare strikes me as being only half a game, only the Simpsons humour prevents it from being a real dog. Fans will love it, everyone else will feel cheated.

DAVE

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

Lisa

Bart's sister Lisa appears as a fairy intent on turning Bart into a frog – which she does on numerous occasions.

Principal Skinner

Bart's head teacher is always moaning on about Bart's dress code. Occasionally he'll try to dress the nipper.

Pillar Box

These post boxes pop off their stands and try their hardest to trip up Bart. Just jump them to avoid getting hit.

Saxophone

Catch the notes and watch Bart walk in the opposite direction he's meant to be going in.

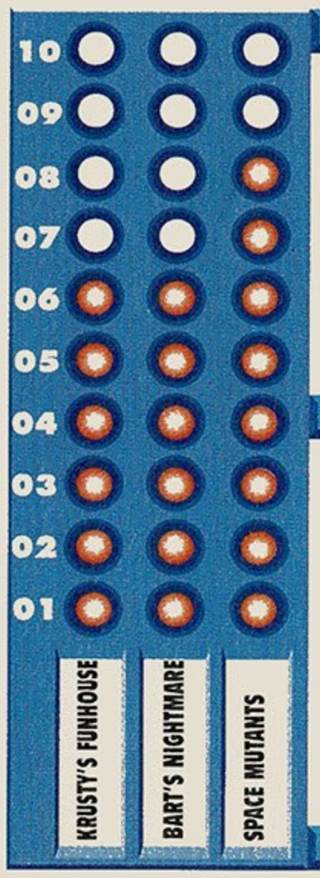
Tree People

Annoying little chaps that are a real pain to get rid of. They also come in groups so it doesn't make it that easy.

Old Hag

If Bart doesn't want to stay as a frog, he must give her a big smacker right on the lips. (No tongues!)

INSTANT ACCESS



BART'S NIGHTMARE

FLYING EDGE
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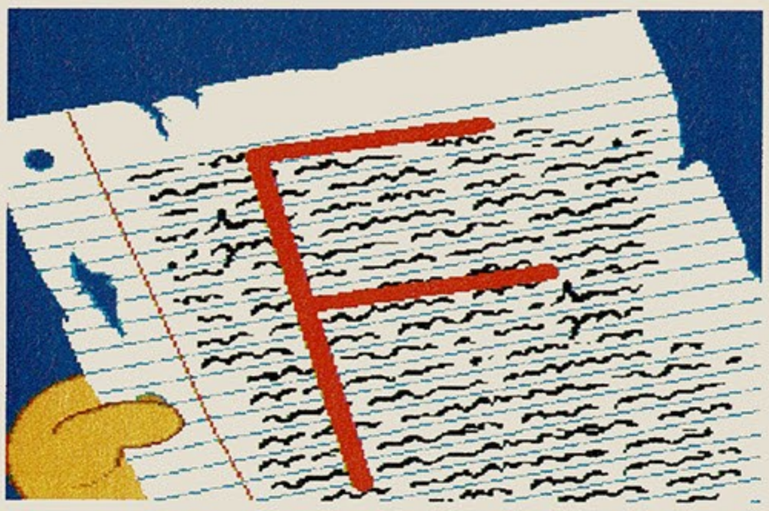
OUT AUG

GAMEPLAY	05
GRAPHICS	08
SOUND	06
ADDICTION	05

OVERALL

06



Barts final score for his adventure and you can't get much lower than that. This is the lowest score possible so Bart if he wants to complete his nightmare, must obtain that prestigious A+. On his report no doubt it says, must try harder, pah!

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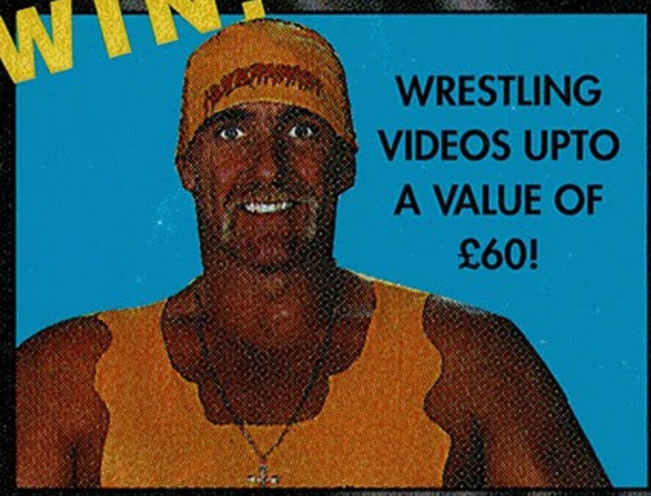

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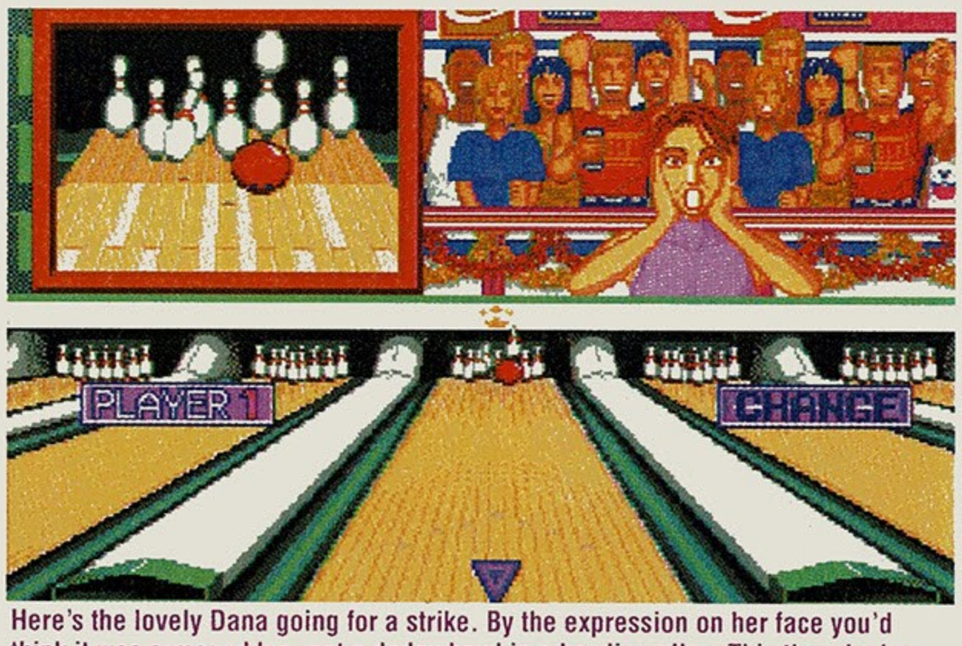


Here's the lovely Dana going for a strike. By the expression on her face you'd think it was armageddon, not a dodgy bowl in a bowling alley. This thow looks like it's going to end up as a split. This means that there will be one pin left either side, making them difficult to knock down on the second throw.

As you can see from his scoreboard, Mark "The Marker" is doing appalingly. The game are set on bonus level, so each pin is worth valuable points. This is good for practising your accuracy, particularly with set-ups like this. Use a bit of spin, and cross your fingers, and you might get these three down.

championship BOWLING

Last time Steve Bough went bowling he managed to actually get his fingers stuck in the bowling ball. So, making sure the six-button joypad was nowhere near the Mega Drive, he approached this bowling-fest with a pack of Elastoplast at the ready...

Point the arrow, stop the indicator and "crash", the pins all fall down. Great.

Tentrix have produced the first dedicated Mega Drive bowling game ever. Previously, Sega owners would have been limited to the bowling section on the Grandslam's Master System version of *The Flintstones*, but Mentrix have taken that idea and blown it into a full simulation of the popular pastime.

Bowling, which is primarily a game that's played with at least three people in the real world, is adapted for up to four players in this highly unusual conversion – and without the use of the much-hyped Sega Tap or EA Four Play. Just plug in your two pads and pass them around when you change players. After all, only one person can bowl at a time, right?

For all of you that have ever graced various Superbowl 2000s (or whatever your local alley's called) throughout the country, you'll know that the essentials of ten-pin bowling aren't that difficult to grasp. Well, come on, the Americans invented it. Therefore a bowling sim on cart has to rely on plenty of options to provide variation.

You get to choose from this motley bunch of bowling addicts: Mark "the Marker" Thomas, Linda "Striker" Tyler, Leroy "Pin Action" Jackson and Dana "Smarts" Kaplan. Each of the characters (and they are real *characters*!) has their own particular style – for instance, Leroy is a powerhouse – which is detailed elsewhere in the review. Bowling buffs are presented with a good selection of alleys to compete over, and there are even four different venues for the competition.

At the end of the day, though, Mentrix can put in as many options as they want, but if you haven't got a Bud in one hand and a dog in the other (hot dog, that is!), you won't appreciate the true draw of this unique American sport. In fact, you can always swap shoes with your neighbour and get true foot rot the way that only rent-a-shoe booths can normally provide.

Championship Bowling's not bad at all, I'm surprised to say. Originality certainly plays a large part in the enjoyment, and if you've never played a game like this on computer before, to fully appreciate it you should have a few friends playing at the same time. One-player games are for saddos, even though this does provide quite a decent tournament.

Don't be put off by the fact that 75% of your time will be spent sitting around if you're playing with three other players. This provides loads of time to drink tea (or whatever your tipple is) and scoff your face silly. After all, if you went to a bowling alley, you'd be doing exactly the same thing, wouldn't you?

Sadly, playing Championship Bowling doesn't require much skill: you can pick it up in minutes, and put it down just as quickly. Gameplay isn't exactly oozing from the cartridge, but then what do you expect from a bowling game? What can be developed, is; like the detail and animation of the characters. They all jump in ecstasy and cry in defeat, just as you would in a real game.

Sega haven't picked this one up for official UK release (which isn't too surprising), so it'll be hard to track down. My advice is to wait till it enters a bargain bucket for a tenner, then pick it up for the novelty value.

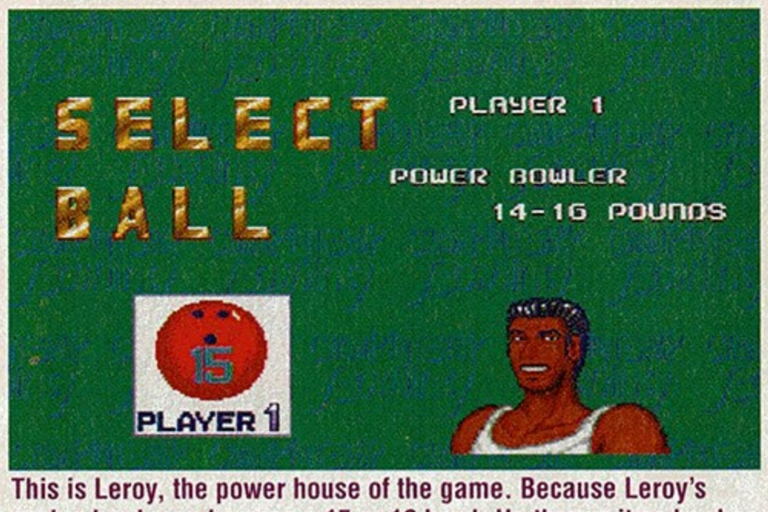
STEVE

This game is set in the bonus mode. it's similar to the normal mode, but each frame can be worth up to 30 points (this one's worth 24). A strike is worth an extra ten points making a maximum scoring potential of 40 per frame. The spin gauge at the bottom should usually be set in the centre, but the pointer moves quicker depending on the size of your ball. Even if you don't get it quite central, you can compensate for it be aiming just off centre as you shoot the bowling ball.

The blatantly sexy Linda is directing her kisses at you in thanks for the crowd applause (what a tramp!). She's just scored a double, which means she's managed to knock down all ten pins two times in a row. If she gets a third strike, she'll get a turkey! (Information as to the origin of the turkey will be gratefully recevied at the usual address.) Linda is the sterotypical bimbo of the game, complete with the red sequined mini-skirt and blonde hair – sad old Mentrix.

ionship LING

OVERALL 04



This is Leroy, the power house of the game. Because Leroy's such a hard man he uses a 15 or 16 bowl. He throws it as hard as he can purely because he's so tough. The problem with Leroy is that his spin gauge moves like lightning, so you must be quick.

It would be easy to jump to a quick decision and say Championship Bowling's a complete rip-off – I dare say other reviewers will do exactly that. Yes, easy to do, but very short-sighted. There's more to bowling – whether real or simulated – than just chucking a ball at some pins. To fully appreciate the game, it's essential to have loads of people playing at a time. Anyone that criticises Championship Bowling because of its shallow one-player game is crazy. After all, you wouldn't go to a real bowling alley by yourself, would you? So why do you expect any difference in a console game? No, bowling's all about making your own fun, and if you do that with Championship Bowling, then you can have some great times. Of course, the game does lack the skill required in real bowling – but that was always painful for beginners anyway.

My only gripe with this game is the price. If, as I've said, you're creating all the fun offscreen, why do they expect you to pay full whack for what is undeniably a very simply constructed game?

DOM

As you can see there are four bowling alleys, each with their own characteristics. The fast lane is very oily and will require you to put less spin on your ball. The slow lane will cause the ball to spin a great deal, because the lane is very dry. With the special option, the lanes will change at random, thus making scoring difficult. The change option lets you change at any time to suit your preference.

SUIT YOURSELF

1. Mark "The Marker" Thomas, described as a finesse bowler who doesn't take chances. Obviously, with his blond hair, blue eyes and totally disregard for deadlines, this is the guy Steve always chooses.

2. Linda "Striker" Tyler, who always scores one way or another. Linda, too, is a finesse bowler who relies on her accuracy and kisses to the scorer to bring her through sticky patches. Don't give her a heavy ball.

3. Leroy "Pin Action" Jackson was given the nickname for his ability to hit the pins with frightening power. Precision isn't his real strong point but his power is enough to impress the hordes of female fans.

4. Dana "Smarts" Kaplan, the strong independent lass of the game, which is reflected in her cool, calm and totally accurate bowling. Strikes are her specialty, especially if one of the crowd tries it on.

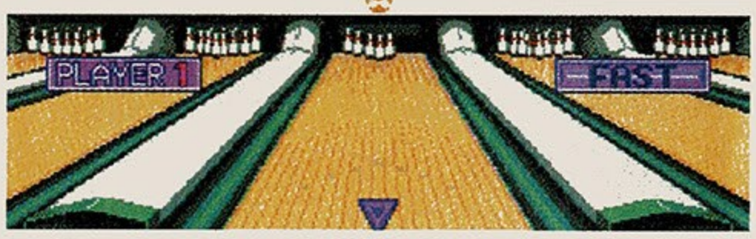
This is good. Every now and then you just fancy a bash at something not too stressful and Championship Bowling delivers big time. Point the arrow, stop the speed indicator at just the right moment and "crash", the pins all fall down. Great.

No, I'm serious, it really is that simple, and what's more it's so very, very enjoyable. It's another game that flourishes in a group play environment, developing an extremely competitive edge as your skills develop and you begin spinning the ball and picking up those loose pins.

The down side of this game is that its presentation leaves a lot to be desired and whilst the alley is very well illustrated, the accompanying sound and graphics are very minimal and do little to raise the level of excitement in the ensuing competition. Also, there are only four different alleys and although they all differ in the way they play, there is little you can do to vary a game of bowling and it eventually becomes a little samey. Good fun, but not enough game to be worth the money.

DAVE

Above, Linda poses in front of the crowd as she tumbles all the pins for a strike. She uses Right Guard, thankfully.
Below, Leroy gets tough as the pins don't fall as he hoped. This boy needs to brush up on his accuracy!



A normal championship game commences, as Leroy flashes a confident smile to the camera. These lanes are fast, so Leroy's power without spin is ideal for knocking 'em down. Choose the right bowler for the right lane, or you could end up with a real dummy.

Weaker bowlers are suited to lanes which require lots of slow accurate spin – the girls are best for finesse.

WHAT'S THE SCORE

If you thought our scoring system was complicated, check out the real ten-pin bowling system.

Each bowler gets two rolls per frame to knock all the pins down for ten frames. A spare is recorded if the pins are knocked down by the second roll. A strike is recorded if all the pins are knocked down by the first roll.

Open frame: the maximum score for an open frame is 9, each pin knocked down will be added to the score.

Spare frame: a spare is recorded with a diagonal line across the box. It's worth ten points plus the total pins knocked down by the next roll.

Strike frame: a strike is recorded with an X, it's worth ten points plus the total of the next two rolls.

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REVIEW

Planting lots of trees around your settlements is an excellent way to keep your followers happy. In *Two Tribes* you gain your power from the manna you receive from your worshippers' prayers so keeping them happy with you is very important.

A bit of this and a bit of that. If an opponent becomes too powerful, bring him down to size with a bit of divine intervention. Here an earthquake, a storm and a column of fire has ensured that an extensive rebuilding project is needed in this town.

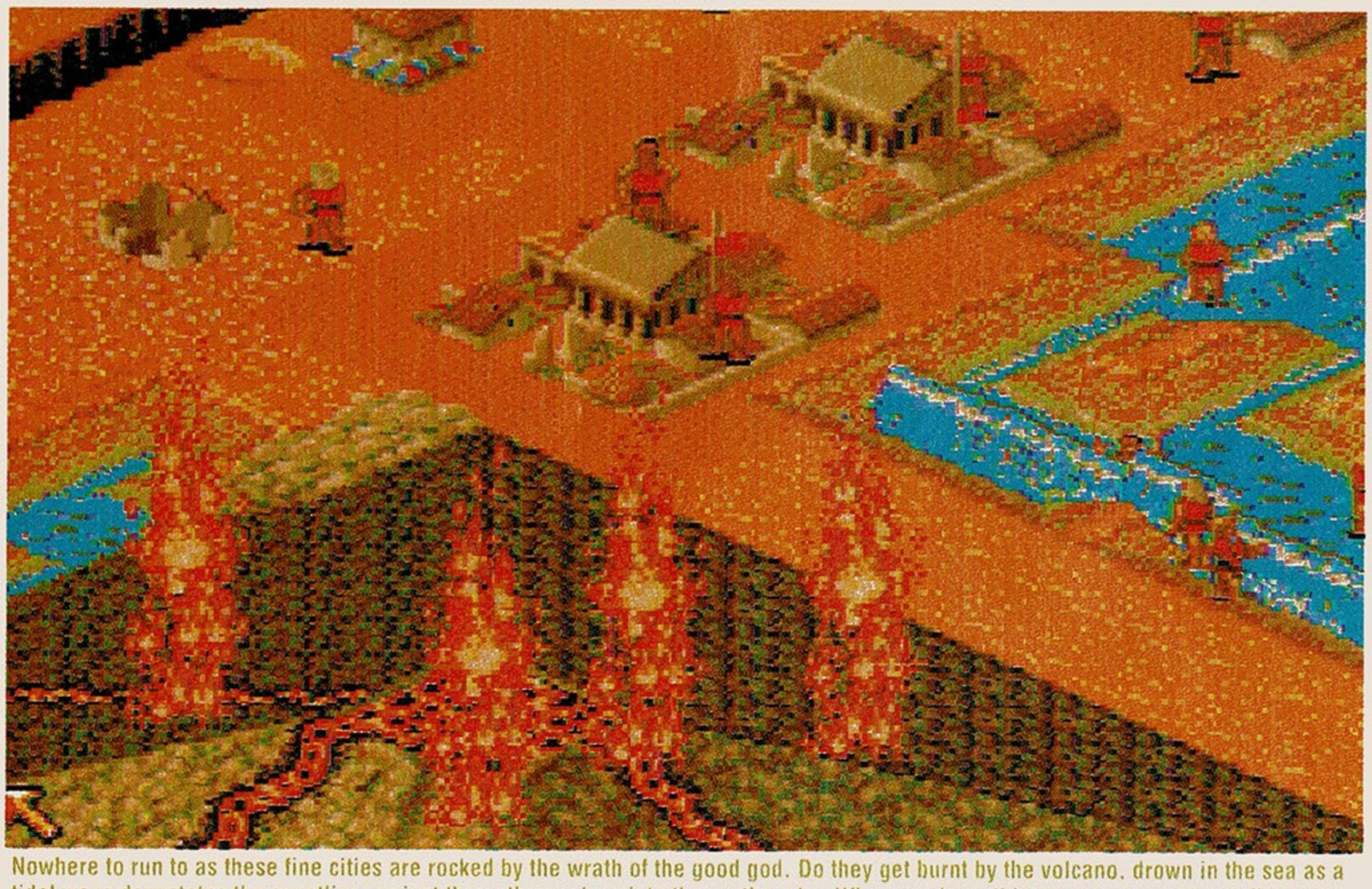
TWO TRIBES

POPULOUS II

I'm a god, I'm a god! It's like a dream come true. All those people worshipping me, all this power at my finger tips, oh happy days. Under the rather self-imposed yoke of the "god game" label, *Two Tribes – Populous II* is one of a rather limited number of thinking games to reach the Mega Drive. Spread over a thousand levels, this is not a game for the cutesy platformer or high speed blast merchant, it is a game that requires time, patience, skill and a modicum of sadistic megalomania.

For those unfamiliar to the award-winning *Populous* scenario (originally released by Electronic Arts on the Mega Drive) it goes like this. You are a malevolent god ruling judiciously over your flock of worshippers. The more they worship you, the more manna you accumulate and the more powerful you become. To win their favour, you must, of course, provide them with a secure world where they can multiply and prosper. The more they multiply, the more people there will be to offer praise to you. Easy, right?

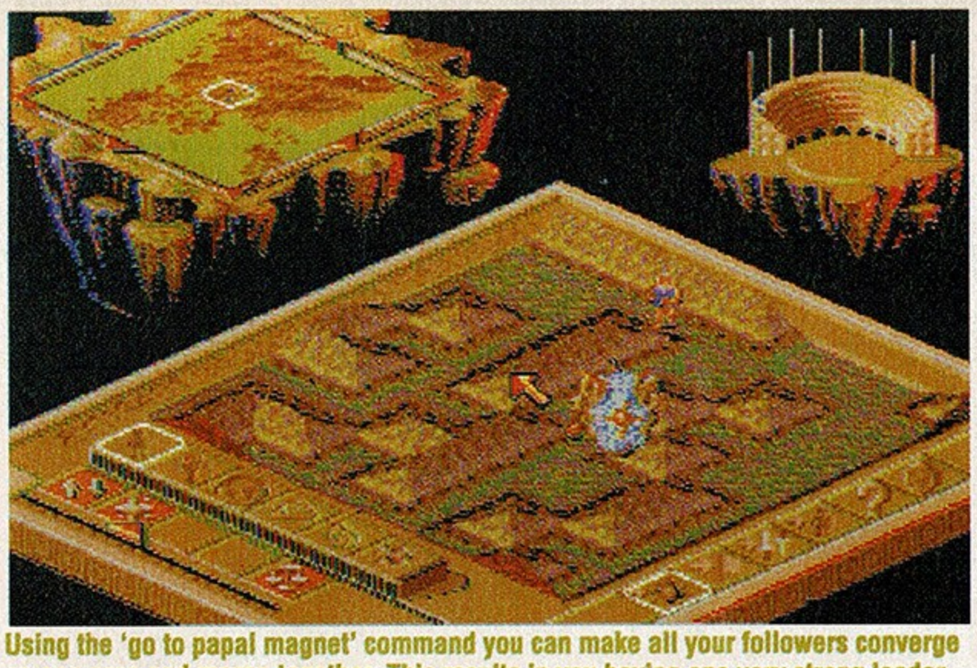
However, this is when it all starts to get tricky, for whilst you are using your godly powers to raise and lower land for your diligent little tribesmen to build on, a rival diety is doing the same for his followers not too far away and he wants the same as you.



Nowhere to run to as these fine cities are rocked by the wrath of the good god. Do they get burnt by the volcano, drown in the sea as a tidal wave devastates the coastline, or just throw themselves into the earthquake. When you have this many powers at your fingertips the game really does become a vicious affair and takes on the feeling of a shoot-'em-up. Burn 'em, drown 'em, make 'em pay for choosing the wrong religion. Isn't that how most of the world's wars have started?

It's no huge secret that great Amiga titles usually make very mediocre Mega Drive games – and vice-versa. However, still they try. Populous II was one of 1992's biggest titles and with a new name, Two Tribes, it's finally reached the Mega Drive. Only Dave Perry had an ego large enough to cope with this godly task.

Visually and aurally this is a megalomaniac's feast that is all the hype cracks it up to be.



Using the 'go to papal magnet' command you can make all your followers converge on one area and merge together. This results in you having one very strong leader rather than lots of weak tribesmen. This is especially useful if you want to entice your men to different areas of the island.

OVERALL

09

TWO TRIBES

POPULOUS II

But the land ain't big enough for the both of you. Religions never did co-exist well and eventually it will be a matter of survival for the fittest as the opposing tribes clash in their battle for good land. If you lose your worshippers you are as good as finished in the god business so divine intervention is called for. A little earthquake here, a small tidal wave there and soon your people will start resting easy again, until the other god seeks revenge, of course.

As time goes on you grow in stature and eventually become hooked on the magnitude of the havoc you can wreak upon the poor defenceless humans. This is where *Two Tribes* differs from its predecessor. In *Populous* the whole game was one of strategy and thinking, like an animated chessboard. Your powers were not quite so dramatic so the emphasis was on gameplay rather than graphics. In *Two Tribes – Populous II* the visuals have been so souped up that you can almost play the game as a shoot-'em-up as you hurl lightning and fireballs from the sky.

Populous II is a huge game that seems to sit well on the Mega Drive, and with the hoped release of the Sega Mouse, it will become even more playable. If you're sick of mindless violence and want to get into some cold-blooded pre-meditated genocide then read on...

1. This is the world map. You can keep an eye on what's going on from here and use it for travelling quickly around the land.
2. The amphitheatre shows you how your population size compares to your rivals. The blue dots are good and the red bad.
3. This is the main playing area where you get a decent close-up of events. This is where you directly interact with your settlements.
4. Choose one of the six elements at your disposal so that you can utilise its divine effects. There may only be a couple available.
5. These are your divine effects. Each can be selected with the cursor and used directly on the playing area if you have enough manna.
6. Place Papal Magnet allows you to place your religious totem anywhere in the world. You can only do this if you have a leader.
7. The settle command encourages your people to search for new land to populate and build on. This is ideal for boosting your following.
8. If you click on this icon your people will leave their dwellings and go looking for bad walkers to fight.
9. This will encourage your people to gather together and merge their tribes to form bigger and stronger settlements.
10. The question icon is invaluable for finding out information about a walker or a dwelling. just select it then click on the item you want to know about.
11. This is the game option screen and allows you to save your game, change the screen size, adjust the game speed or just input codes. After all, you're a god!

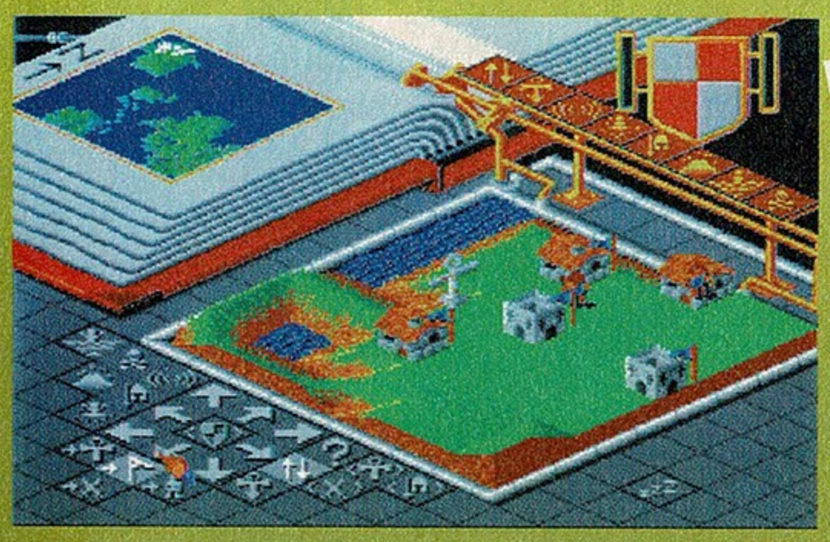
Previous god games like Populous have bored the pants off me. Yes, it's all very well planning and plotting, but if you get no satisfaction from your evil deeds, then where's the enjoyment? Two Tribes is a different matter all together, and certainly a great improvement over EA's original.

If you're a techie strategist, then there's plenty of content in Two Tribes to keep you happy, but if – like me – you also like the occasional injection of action to spice things up, Two Tribes has that too. If you haven't got any of the passwords for the later levels and extra powers, then the first levels may get a bit daunting and depressing as you pansy around with pathetic fire balls and the like. But, believe me, it's worth persevering as the more experience you get, the more powerful and varied your divine interventions become – some are quite extraordinary!

I never played the Amiga version of Populous II, and, to be honest, was always rather dubious of the praising reviews it received; but this is one of those obscure-looking, original games that is all the hype cracks it up to be.

DOM

And then there was...



POPULOUS
Released: October 1990
What a monster this game was. When it first appeared on the home computer it was revered as one of the greatest games of ever. Totally original and extremely addictive it ruled the strategy world for a long, long time. By the time it arrived on the console, however, it was well out of date and it showed. Now it looks very primitive and uninteresting although it should not be ignored that the gameplay is still as challenging even if the appeal has long since dwindled.

MEGA-LO-MANIA
Released: March 1993
The most successful of Virgin's god game releases, *Mega-lo-Mania* was a conversion from the now defuncted Mirrorsoft's Amiga smash. With its twee speech and spattering of humour this was a lovely game to play. Helping your warriors to evolve their weaponry quicker than your rival's involved quick-thinking and careful strategy but overall it lacked that hands-on involvement that really keeps you hooked.

POWERMONGER
Released: March 1993
Bullfrog's *Populous* off-shoot caused quite a hoo-hah when it was released on the Amiga. Unfortunately it was a bit of a lame duck on the Mega Drive, being too fiddly to control and way too dull to encourage perseverance. The idea of a non-techie war game was excellent in principle but lacked any real excitement by the time it reached the console. Look out for this one in a bargain bucket near you and buy it for a friendly insomniac.

I love any game that actually rewards good play and clever thinking. In Populous II – Two Tribes, the further you get the more powerful you become; very few games have that kind of hook today.

At first I found the control method of the game rather cumbersome and inhibiting, I just couldn't select the icons as fast as I wanted. This is an ongoing niggle with all converted games programmed to utilise a point and click method of control (hopefully soon be rectified with the release of the Sega Mouse) and I personally believe the only real reason why god games have never really caught on in the console world.

Visually and aurally this is a megalomaniac's feast. Flames billow into the air, waves crash against the coastline and there is even a mythology lesson in there with Perseus, Hercules and Odysseus running around all over the place crushing anyone who dares to stand in their paths. As shacks evolve into temples, it is all displayed in minute detail and there are even little flags to tell you how big the population is.

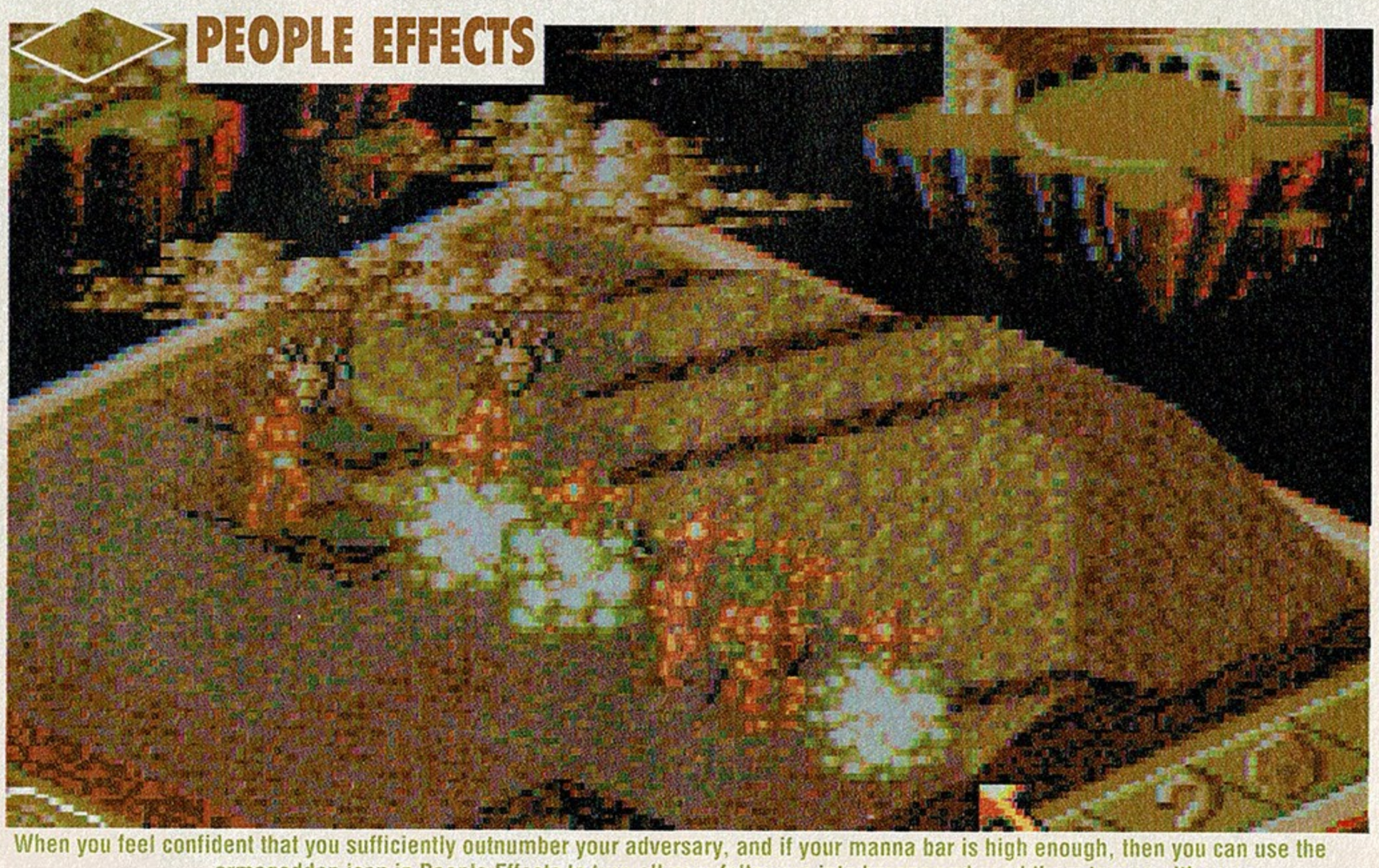
Oh, I could go on and on about it. This is a great game and a healthy injection of class to the Mega Drive's catalogue of inane running and jumping games. Don't just dismiss Two Tribes – Populous II out of hand. Treat it with the dignity it deserves and if it doesn't become the monster that it was on other formats then there is a lack of adventure in the console gamesplaying world.

DAVE

SCARY MONSTERS

Ooh, spooky! Very often you will just be happily playing your game, burning things, creating tidal waves, you know, the usual stuff, and some weird mythological beast will appear from nowhere and cause disaster. Here are two that we encountered.

PEOPLE EFFECTS



When you feel confident that you sufficiently outnumber your adversary, and if your manna bar is high enough, then you can use the armageddon icon in People Effects to turn all your followers into heroes and send them to war with your opponents. At this point things are pretty much out of your control so sit back and enjoy the battle.

Sorry, but I just don't get it. Yes, I understand that Populous II was great on the Amiga, but on the Mega Drive it doesn't quite work for me. The joypad controls are a real pain, and the simplistic raising and lowering of land gets very monotonous.

The actual idea behind the game – essentially taking over the world and putting the little people under your thumb – is very innovative, and just the sort of thing that I would enjoy, but I'm not totally convinced that it's well-executed enough to retain your interest. The early levels are very repetitive, and personally I couldn't be bothered to persevere to get to any of the later levels. Even if they are very good, then why bother having all the boring early stages? If you're used to the conventional pick-up-and-play aspects of Mega Drive games, you'll need a lot of tolerance and patience to get anything from Two Tribes.

STEVE

FIRE EFFECTS

The fire effects in *Two Tribes* are definately my favourites. They are both powerful and spectacular and have an almost immediate effect on the population below. It's a great feeling raising a volcano or unleashing a tower of flames but certainly the most accessible and effective is the rain of fire. Shown above, balls of fire fall heavily onto the settlements targetted. Burn, baby burn.

WATER EFFECTS

By placing baptismal fonts throughout a bad settlement you can cause untold chaos. Any walker who should happen into one of these fonts is instantly submersed in holy water and converted to the opposite religion. This is great for boosting your numbers and starting fights in bad strongholds. Trouble is, if your people start settling in the area the same will happen to them.

NO MORE HEROES ANYMORE

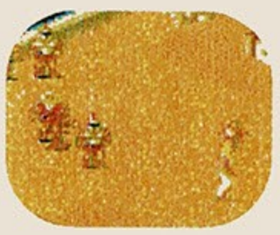
Divine retribution is all very well but even a great god like you can't be everywhere at once. This is where heroes come in handy. Turn your leader into a mythical warrior and let him do all the leg work.

PERSEUS – PEOPLE
The most intelligent of the Greek heroes. Perseus is the best all-round soldier and a real pest to your opponent.

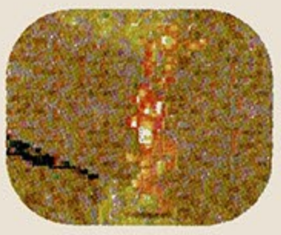
ADONIS – VEGETATION
The god of vegetation. Adonis divides in two after combat, multiplying your forces and diminishing your enemy's.

HERACLES – EARTH
With the strength of two, your leader becomes a formidable foe when turned into Heracles. Looks a bit like Arnie.

ODYSSEUS – AIR
Blink and you'll miss him. Odysseus is the swiftest of all the heroes. Ideal for a sudden ambush or counter-attack.



HELEN OF TROY – WATER
Hubba, hubba! This blonde beach baby is so beautiful that her hapless enemies simply follow her to a watery grave.



ACHILLES – FIRE
With his head aflame, the heroic Achilles struts ominously through bad settlements burning all he encounters.

Every world is unique in *Two Tribes*. As you progress through the game you play against increasingly powerful gods and in each world you are only allowed to use a limited number of the divine effects. Thought and tactics are very important.

Should you emerge victorious you will go to the scene displayed here and be given experience points by Zeus. These points can be added to the element of your choice, making its effects more powerful.

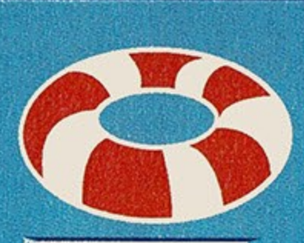
INSTANT ACCESS

TWO TRIBES

VIRGIN
£44.99
OUT SEPT

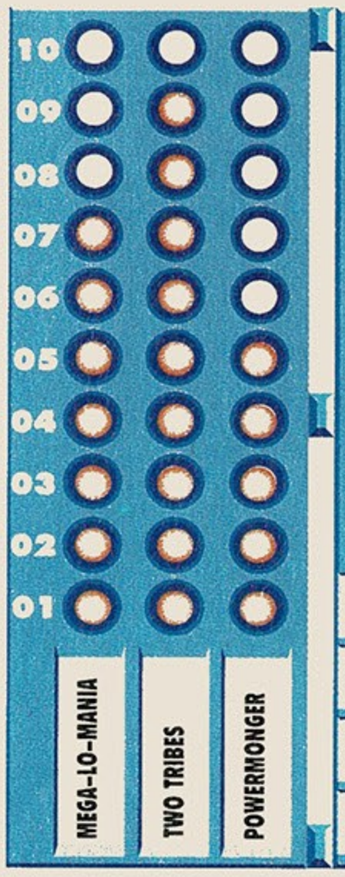
one player

8Mbit



passwords for worlds

available in UK

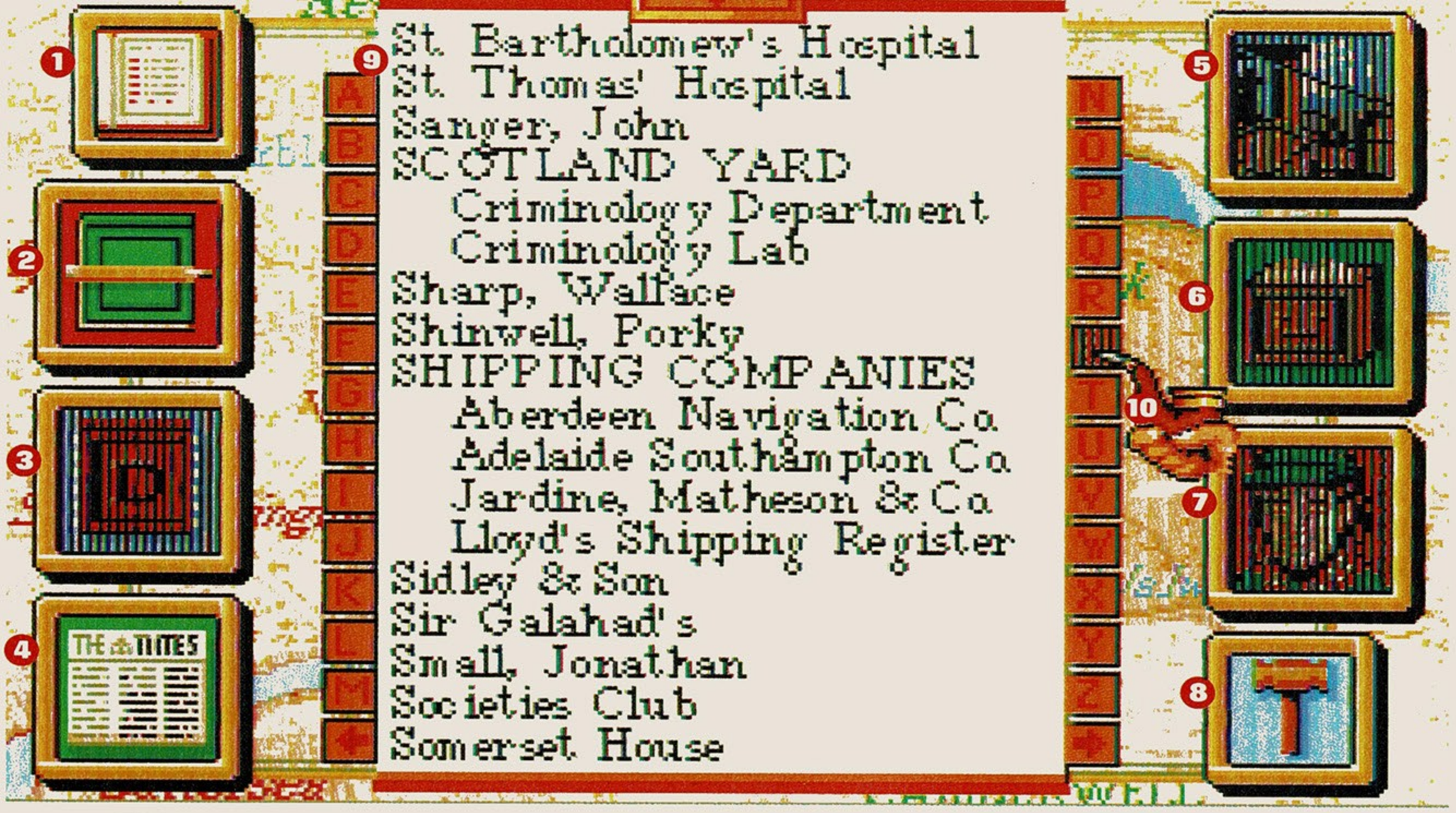


GAMEPLAY	09
GRAPHICS	09
SOUND	08
ADDICTION	08

OVERALL

09

REVIEW



This screen is the one you'll constantly return to in order to contemplate your next move.

1. If you feel at any stage you want to return to the main menu for loading or saving, click on this box and you'll be back to the start-up screen.

2. Holmes's notebook contains all his personal contacts. This is one of the most useful accessories in solving a mystery. Always revert to this whenever you're stuck.

3. Again, like the notebook, Holmes's directory houses tons of relevant names to the cases. There are so many that it will take you ages to find out who all of them are.

4. At the start of the case, check The Times for any snippets of relevant information. Read it carefully as you'll probably find something that connects.

5. You'll be using the horse and carriage regularly. When you want to go and see someone, press this and it will immediately whizz you there.

6. Holmes's personal files often have information that you wouldn't be able to find elsewhere. Most of the times, it's pretty sketchy though.

7. The Baker Street Irregulars. They are your eyes and ears on the street. They can find out information that no-one has access to – normally by eavesdropping.

8. When you think you have enough evidence click on this icon and it will allow you to go to court. If you can't access the court, you haven't enough evidence.

9. This will indicate the pages of the directory. Look for names that you might have heard and then pay them a visit – it's often worth your while.

10. The famous pipe. Use this to click on the boxes, and of course have good smoke whilst your contemplating your next move.

After narrowly missing the part of Inspector Morse, our intrepid time-traveller smokin' Steve Bough grabbed his pipe, stepped into his egg-box and whizzed back in time...

Sherlock Holmes

CONSULTING DETECTIVE VOLII

"Ah, Dr Watson what will it be?" "I'd like a pint of your finest and some valuable information, please Landlord." Watson is seen here trying to glean information. You'll be surprised at what you'll find out from chatting to people. Pub landlords see everything, so always pop down to the suspect's local for a swift pint and a chat. Within this scene Watson is obtaining facts on the case of The Pilfered Paintings. The real mystery is how the landlord knows so much.

OVERALL

06

the irrefutable class exuded by Sherlock Holmes II makes it one of the better titles available to CD owners

Here's a screen showing all the neccessaries needed to solving the puzzling mysteries. Holmes will tell you how to use them with a bit of dialogue from the CD.

Admittedly, you can gain a lot of satisfaction from completing Sherlock II, especially going to court and giving all the right answers, but the problem lies in the deduction. It's a very slow process, involving lots of pointless trips to gain evidence even though you know who the culprit is. My other complaint with Sherlock is that when you've solved all three mysteries, what do you do? It's not really the sort of game you keep going back to, because what's the point, you know who did it!

There are good points, though. The film coverage is excellent, and the puzzles certainly do tax your brain; it's slow-moving but you're not expecting a fast game. It's also much better than the first Sherlock, with tougher mysteries and better graphics.

Sherlock II is a consumable. It's not really worth having in your library, as I don't think you'd go back to it, but at the end of the day it is fun to play. I wish it was a case of "Elementary, my dear Watson," but it's not!

STEVE

You don't need to have an investigative mind to enjoy *Sherlock Holmes II*, but it helps. Riding on the surprising success of the first *Sherlock* CD game, *Sherlock II* has learned a few things since his last outing. *Sherlock* falls into the category of an RPG although its stimulation isn't provided by the normal roleplaying ingredients.

Brought to you once again by Sega, Sherlock utilises the capacity of the CD format to incorporate over an hour of semi full-colour interactive gameplay, this time spread over two CDs. As in the last adventure, there are three problematic mysteries which need to be unravelled.

The first mystery, The Two Lions, has Holmes and his faithful companion Dr Watson puzzling over the connection between the murder of two lions, and the murder of a sailor, a Mr Stephen Lyons. It's your job to investigate these deaths and look for possible links between the killings. Could it possibly be that the lions, being a symbol of the British Empire, were killed for political reasons? It may sound farcical, but it's up to you to decipher the case.

The second case, The Pilfered Paintings, follows the disappearance of two valuable works of art, De Kuyper's Blue Unicorn and Summer Solstice. Holmes must find the motive for the theft; was it for money or somebody's private collection?

The third and final case to tax the great detective's brain is The Murdered Munitions Magnate. Again diversifying massively from the other two cases, you must find the killer of Courtney Allen, a man with a distinguished career. Was he murdered for political advantage or for being an adulterer?

Within the game you'll find there's ample assistance available, but firstly you have to know how to use it. One of the most important aspects of this game is to listen. Keep your ears glued for information, there might only be the slightest connection but this is sometimes enough to change the whole investigation.

When you've got enough clues, the judge will let you enter the court and present your damning evidence. But judging by our reception, the jury are still out on whether *Sherlock Holmes II* is an invaluable addition to the Mega-CD market, or another exploitative, uninventive sequel. I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth...

Back to Baker Street

SHERLOCK HOLMES CONSULTING DETECTIVE

Released: April 1993

Sherlock Holmes: Consulting Detective was an authentic conversion of a PC game, and initially bundled with the Mega-CD in the UK. It was the first Mega-CD game to attempt simulated full motion video (actual film footage used within a game). There were again three mysteries for the deductive dodderer to solve, and the format in which he investigated them was the same as the sequel. The original game received mixed reviews, with one camp saying it was innovative and fresh, while others argued that, despite this, people wanted a decent game, and there wasn't one to be found here.

This is the introduction to this case. It's always worth watching to see what they have to say, as you can gain valuable information. It might only be the one name but it's usually worth it.

I don't want to sound like a smart arse but I beat Holmes. Maybe I should give up working for MEGA POWER and go join New Scotland Yard.

Watson consults Murray, the head chemist at Scotland Yard. He's a forensic expert so he can tell you the exact cause of death. Invaluable clues to the way the victim died can be gained here.

What a spiffing piece of software! I must admit I wouldn't personally go out and buy a game like this, as adventures don't really excite me that much, but the irrefutable class exuded by Sherlock Holmes II makes it one of the better titles available to Mega-CD owners. As the hardware in question seems to be rapidly becoming the PC of the console world, it is inevitable that more of these in-depth problem-solving games will appear. However, up until now the fare has been very bland indeed. Sherlock II, though, offers a pretty meaty sample of what the CD is capable of.

The sound is superb, with the digitised characters yapping away at a quite frantic rate. The feeling is that of watching an afternoon TV drama and then being able to dictate its direction. The humour that exists within the rather twee exchanges between Holmes and Watson helps to ease you into the part and the extensive back-up literature that you receive with the game is both comprehensive and authentic enough to convey the Victorian era. More consideration than exhilaration, this is something for long rainy nights – although adrenaline junkies should steer well clear.

DAVE

Sherlock Holmes II only gets a green face from me on the basis of it being highly original and a step in the right direction for Mega-CD games. Otherwise there would be a very blue-looking face over-looking this comment.

My main gripe with Sherlock II is that it's exactly like Sherlock I. I could forgive a few flaws in the first game because it was one of the first American CD games, and presumably fairly experimental. But after the success of Night Trap, which was packed with decent video clips, I had hoped Sherlock II would have progressed from the grainy, repetitive sequences of the first. It hasn't, and looks very bad as a result.

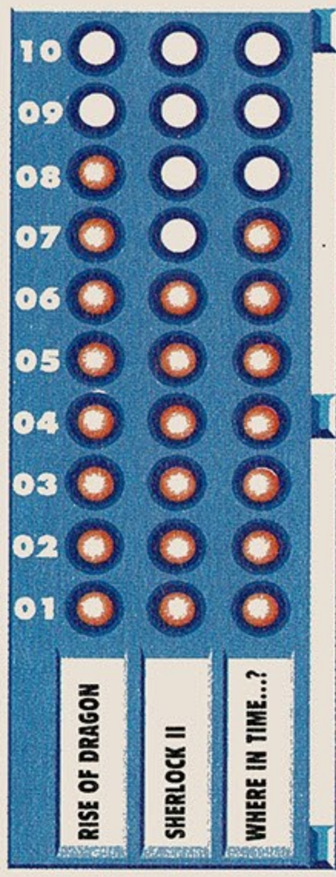
The sound, while novel for the first few goes, is downright irritating. If Holmes's patronising remarks weren't enough, you also have to suffer some very rough English accents from the Yank actors – especially Inspector Lestrade!

Like all adventures, I could forgive all this if the game was at all intelligent. However, it's very linear. You interview a person, he gives you a name, so you interview them... ad infinitum. Intelligence isn't really necessary to be proficient, just a lot of patience. If you bought Sherlock I and still like it, even though the conclusions to the three cases are always the same, you won't find much wrong with Sherlock II. However, if you've got a degree of intelligence, a lack of tolerance for repetition and aren't a trainspotter, then you should steer clear.

DOM

These are the people in the know. Being close personal friends of the great detective they will give you whatever information you need. They are all specialists in their own select field, so whenever you need a professional get on the blower or in the carriage and seek out one of these guys. Some of these folk are more helpful than others, but generally the cops give you the facts straight without any bias or background knowledge. The buildings at the bottom of the picture should be visited once on each mystery. Places like Somerset House have crucial records of people, which can help you fathom out who's related to who.

INSTANT ACCESS



SHERLOCK HOLMES II

SEGA
£39.99
OUT SEPT

one player

slow access time

RAM save for cases

available in UK

GAMEPLAY	07
GRAPHICS	06
SOUND	07
ADDICTION	06

OVERALL
06

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REVIEW

The ADDAMS Family

After previewing EA's Haunting, Steve Bough just had enough time to change his trousers before entering the home of another creepy old family. The Majors were out, though, so Steve ended up at the Addams family residence instead.

Acclaim are big – very big. In 1987 they were worth around $20 million. In 1992 they increased their value to $220 million. This year, they reckon it'll be getting near $300 million. With all that cash, it's not surprising they come out with so many licences. And even if licences can't guarantee a great game (although it's often the case with Acclaim's previous Mega Drive releases), they will certainly get you a lot of press coverage and customer interest. And by combining their Sega and Nintendo interests with most releases, they are sure to be a name people recognise.

As *The Addams Family* creeps onto the Mega Drive, Acclaim estimate they are now the number two third-party producer for the 16-bit Sega, just behind Electronic Arts. With more games than hot dinners planned for the forthcoming months, they hope to give EA a run for the number one spot next year.

And if you thought Acclaim were big, what about their games? The *Addams Family*, for instance, contains a massive 80 levels. It's based on the SNES translation of the film, released earlier this year. In fact, in keeping with most of their previous Sega conversions, it remains totally faithful to the first console version.

The game's success can be put down to its accurate portrayal of the high-grossing film's characters. The Hand makes a brief appearance, as do the rest of the family, but the star of the show is Gomez, Mr Addams. He has to travel through the labyrinthine structures of his house to rescue the other members of his family. He can also pop outside into the back (grave) yard if it gets too tough in the house.

One thing's for sure, though, when Gomez has finished, that last he'll want to hear is that his son, Puggsy, is going on a scavenger hunt...

These spiked tree stumps cannot be defeated. The only safe way to avoid them is to jump over them. The druid to the left can be easily dealt with by jumping on his head. Gomez must get used to jumping as there's plenty to do.

The Addams Family could be described as a standard platform game, but it's the totally polished way in which all the ideas have been implemented which makes it stand head and shoulders above most Mega Drive platform adventures.

Using extremely colourful graphics, the game has instant appeal. With so many graphic variations in the background, from psychedelic to surreal, it's impossible not to get drawn into the game. In the foreground, Gomez and the gory creatures are intricately detailed and supremely fluid. All this has been built around traditional, solid gameplay. Extra lives, secret rooms, short-cuts, extra weapons... this game has everything you expect from an arcade adventure. You won't initially experience the appeal of The Addams Family – because there are so many secret rooms – but the addictive nature of the simple stages should keep you enthralled enough to get deeper into the game. Perseverance brings great rewards in The Addams Family.

STEVE

In the underground there are untold creatures out to get your blood. The A block that Gomez is stood on can either act as a safe vantage point or can give you information that will help you complete the level if you hit it from below.

Gomez stood outside his rather beautiful home – it's amazing how Gomez has spent the royalties from the TV series. Your adventure starts here, immediately facing you with the dilemma of whether to walk to the right and enter the graveyard in your back garden or to go through the front door of the house and face even tougher terrors. Okay, I'm feeling generous, the best way to go is off to the right and then climb the tree to get an extra life.

OVERALL 07

Plenty of secret rooms, numerous gadgets and all manner of twisted creepies keep this game's head above water

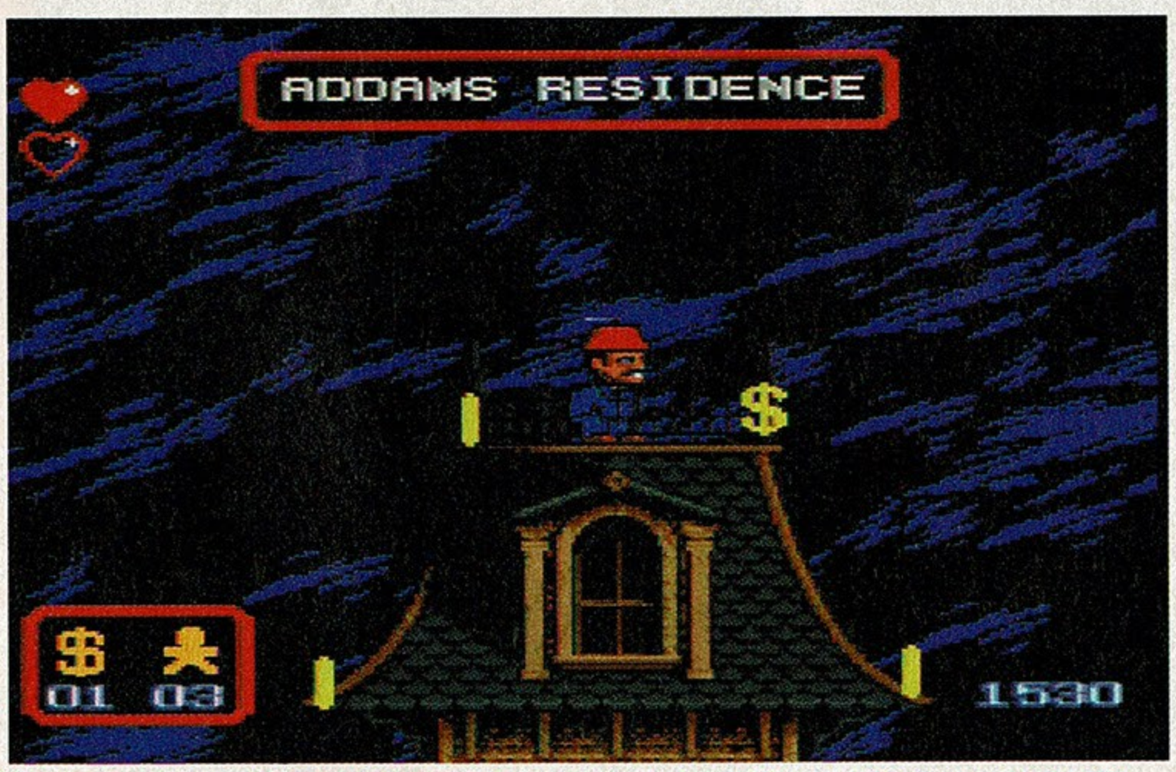
1. The hearts in the corner indicate how much energy you have. Seeing as there are only two, you can imagine that you have to be very careful to avoid being hit. Extra hearts can be picked up along the way.

2. The dollar signs indicate how much money you have stored up so far. Cash isn't much use to you in the game, but when you've finished perhaps it will pay for the upkeep of the house...

3. This indicator is the obvious symbol of how many lives you have left. Gomez is looking in pretty bad shape, so he must locate some extra lives, shown by 1-UP symbols, as quickly as he can.

4. After you enter each room, the game will always tell you where you are.This is quite useful for remembering which location each secret room is in, and essential for mapping purposes.

Gomez is in a pretty safe position, so now's as good a time as any to explain just what all those gadgets and indicators dotted around the screen are used for. Remember, your family are trapped in your house, so it is essential to be able to quickly reference and understand all these indicators.



Gomez dons a very fetching hat at one point in the game. But it's for more than just protecting his head; using the rotors attached to the top, Gomez can fly into the air to reach otherwise inaccessible items. There are plenty of dollar bills up for grabs, so it's worth exploring other possible routes whilst you still have the hat.

In the Pantry you'll be attacked by killer teapots and mutant men with fishbowls on their heads. Gomez doesn't look the cheeriest of chaps in this picture, but neither would you if you encountered these freaks walking around your house. Defeat these fools by bouncing on their heads, or if you can't be bothered to do that, just jump over them.

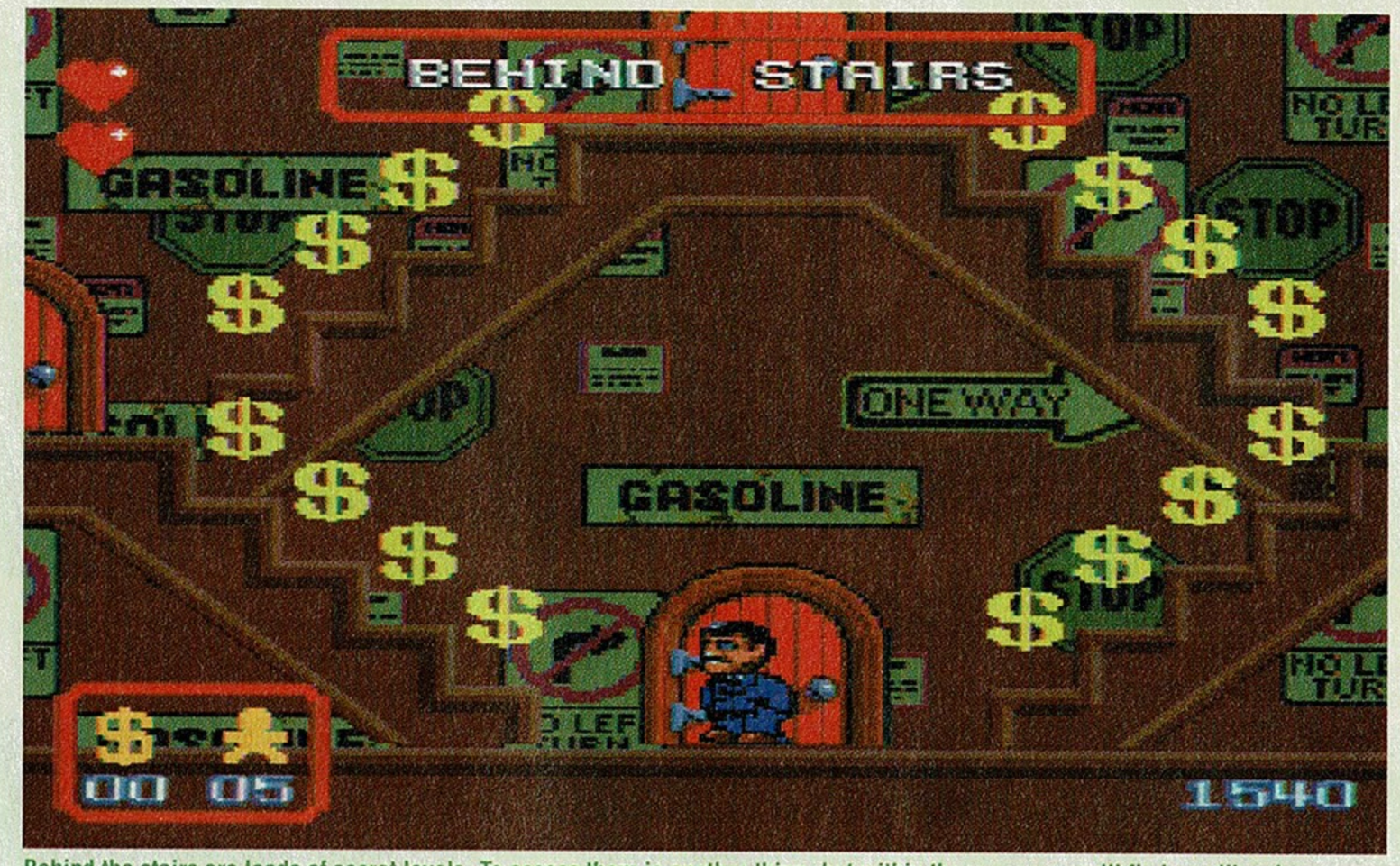
SSHH, IT'S A SECRET

At first The Addams Family appeared to be something more suitable to the Master System than the Mega Drive. The sound and graphics are not your usual stomping Mega Drive affairs, and the control of the main sprite is more reminiscent of Mario than any of our trusty Sega heroes. However, as you play you begin to realise just how big this game really is. Plenty of secret rooms, numerous gadgets and all manner of twisted creepies keep this game's head above water, and what's lacking on the surface is more than compensated for in the gameplay department.

However, none of this is original. The atmosphere and humour of the Addams' crazy world gives the game bite, but even they cannot disguise the fact that the game itself could easily be two or three years old. This doesn't bode well for mass appeal. The actions of the main sprite, Gomez, are mainly limited to running and jumping on people and very often he gets stuck in ridiculous places. Also, he does not take many hits to die, which is annoying, although this is compensated for by the character always continuing from a point near to where he snuffed it, not from the start of the level.

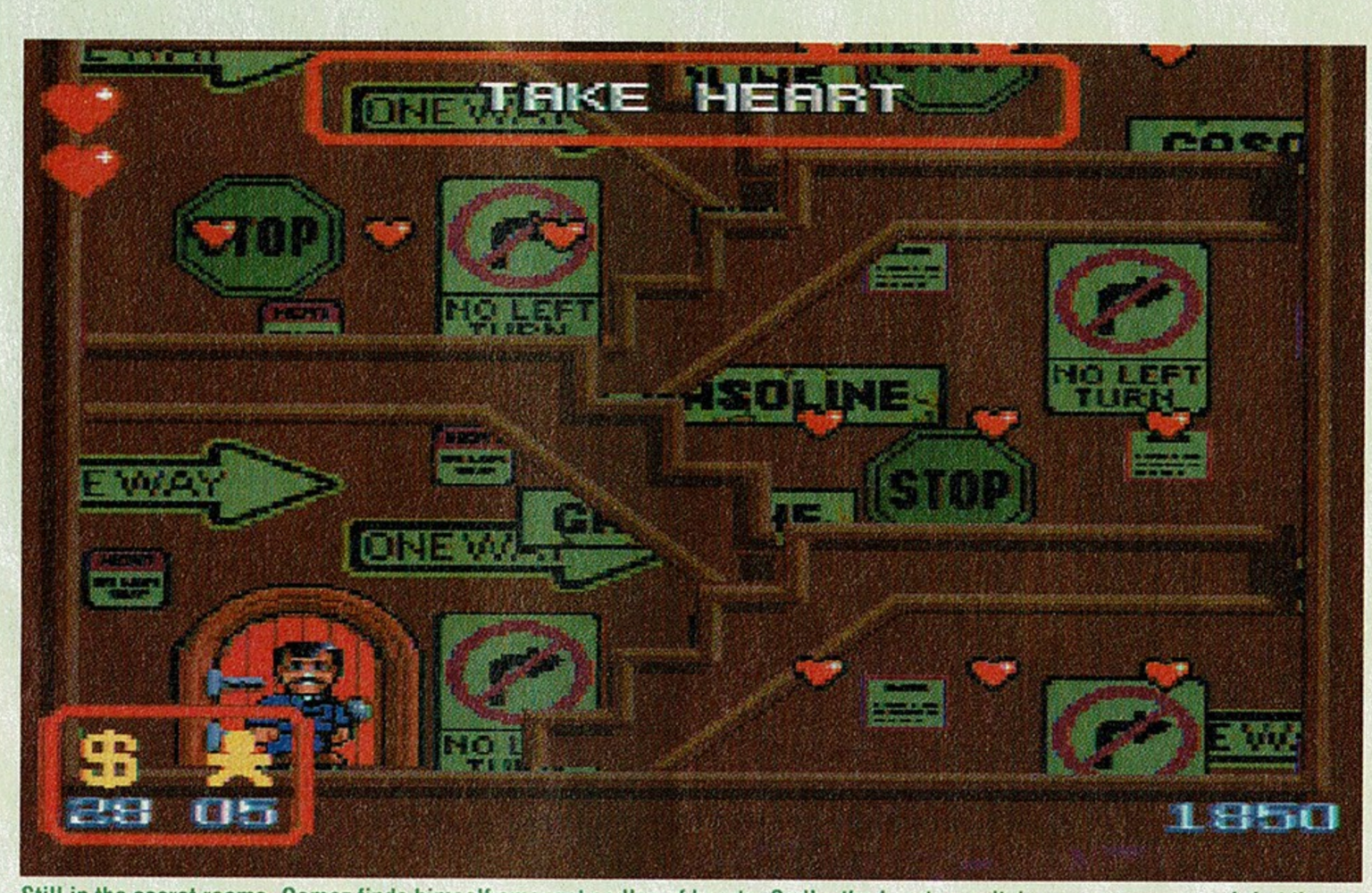
I'm a bit confused about this game, I quite like it, but I want a lot more for my 40 quid.

DAVE



Behind the stairs are loads of secret levels. To access them is another thing, but within these rooms you'll find one like above, where there are hundreds of dollars waiting to be had. There is also a room containing over 24 lives – VERY useful. We'll be revealing all the secret rooms and shortcuts in *The Addams Family* in issue four of MEGA POWER.

In the conservatory you'll find there's plenty of jumping to be done. This means that there are loads of obstacles and jumps for you to conquer.



Still in the secret rooms, Gomez finds himself amongst oodles of hearts. Sadly, the hearts won't do you any more good, but they do provide tons of easy points.

This is an example of when the A boxes give you information. Sometimes they're just platforms, but it's worth checking each one.

The Addams Family looks very fine and dandy, but at the end of the day I didn't have that much fun playing it. I've played tons of arcade adventures and The Addams Family is just the same as everything else, laying down the traditional gameplay foundations and building nothing on them. Yes, there's not much wrong with it, but comparatively, there are plenty of better platformers on the Mega Drive. The draw of games like RoboCod and Sonic is that they have a hook; corny humour and speed respectively. The Addams Family has none of that, and doesn't even feel particularly scary while you're playing it.

SNES owners have yet again flipped over something that is ultimately another monotonous adventure, full of backtracking and boredom. Isn't it about time Acclaim stopped giving us old SNES games, and started giving us something original and specifically designed for the Mega Drive?

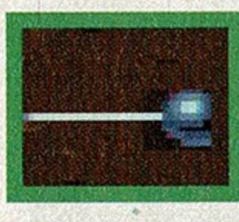
DOM

EASY PICKINGS

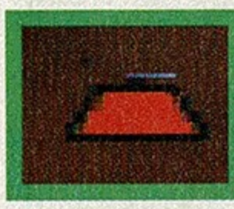
Here's a list of all the items within the game that can benefit Gomez's journey. Some are easy to find, some hard. Just pick up everything you see.

DOLLARS
What do points make? Prizes. In this case dollars mean points. Logical?

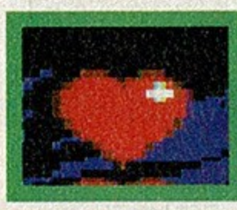
InvincibiLity
This shield will make you invincible for a short period throughout the game.



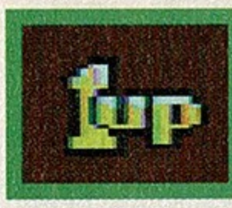
Sword
This sword is an additional weapon that helps him defeat all the evil enemies.



Hover Hat
This hat enables Gomez to fly. He is now able to reach otherwise inaccessible areas.



Heart
These hearts provide you with energy. They are few and far between so take care.



Extra Life
As already mentioned, these are totally invaluable if you're to complete this game.

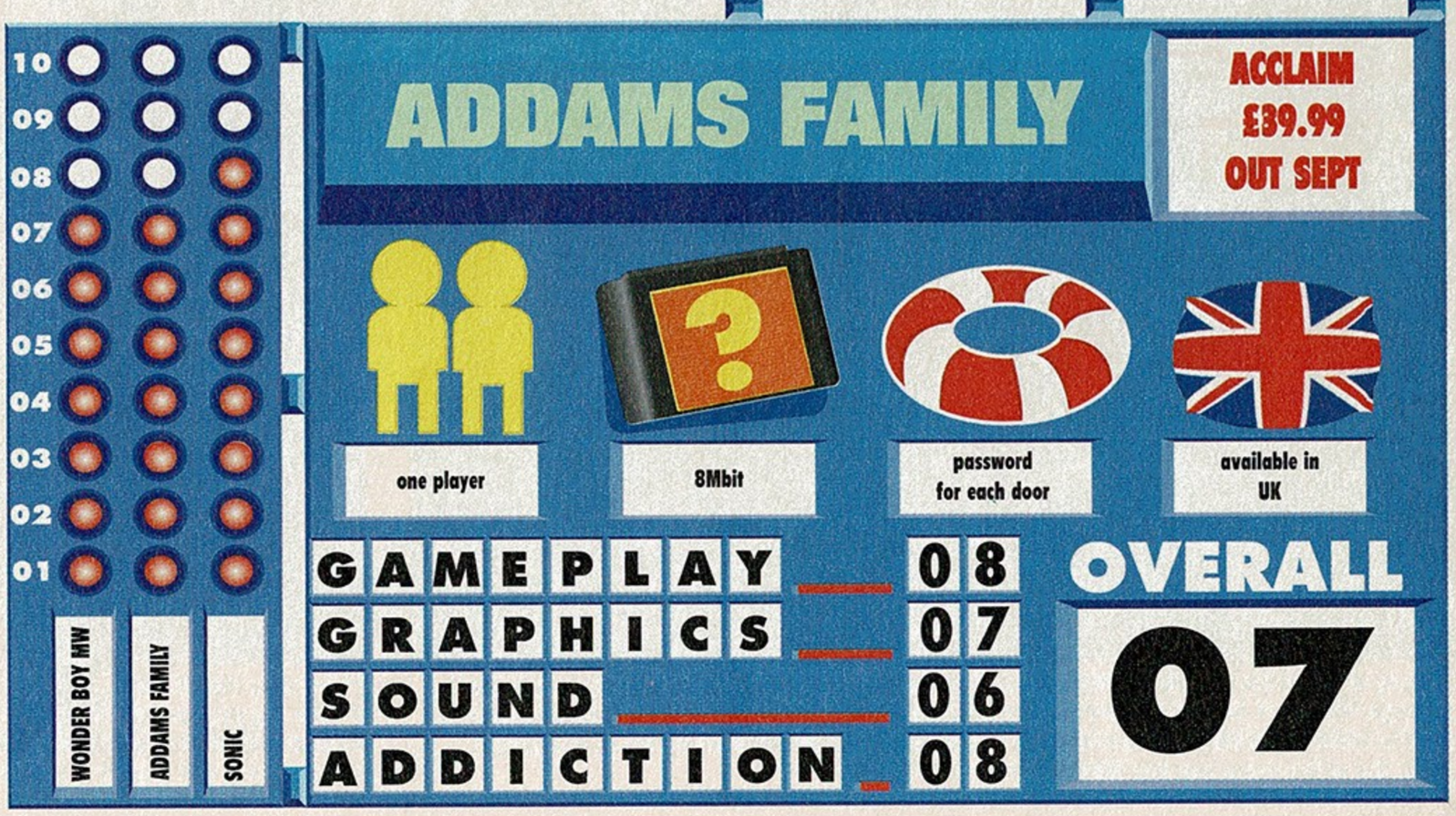
Fast Training Shoes
These training shoes will speed up Gomez considerably, but they don't last for ever.

This is where you end up when you enter the tree. There are endless creatures here that are waiting to kill you, so don't let them. You'll find plenty of goodies down here so make sure you search everywhere, even if you don't think you can get there.

Apart from the stunning portraits of Morticia and Gomez, this level is quite peculiar. The hand makes a guest appearance as do loads of other nasties. There are a few puzzling obstacles to solve, like why the hell does Puggsy look like he's stuck to the inside of your TV screen?

This ominous tree holds two surprises. The first being if you enter the hole you go underneath. The second is there's a big heart at the top. Go on, get jumping, Gomez.

INSTANT ACCESS

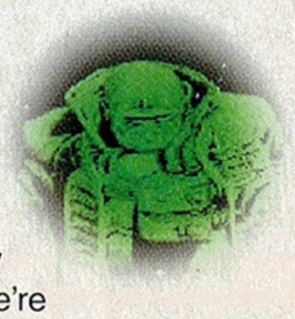


REVIEW

S.I.L.P.H

Silpheed entering an asteroid field. This can be particularly nasty as there are loads of rocks to avoid. Just when you think you've got past one, another one will appear and put a serious dent in your shield. You'll have to be really swift on the controls to dodge everything on screen. Not only do you have to mind the asteroids, but also blow up endless incoming ships. This is no easy feat and proves to be very tricky, but keep your finger on the fire button and it'll make life easier.

This is this game Sega and Mega-CD owners have been waiting for. You've seen the amazing 3-D, read about the outstanding sound, and dreamt of the wicked gameplay that should accompany it, now travel with Steve Bough into deep space as Silpheed becomes a reality.



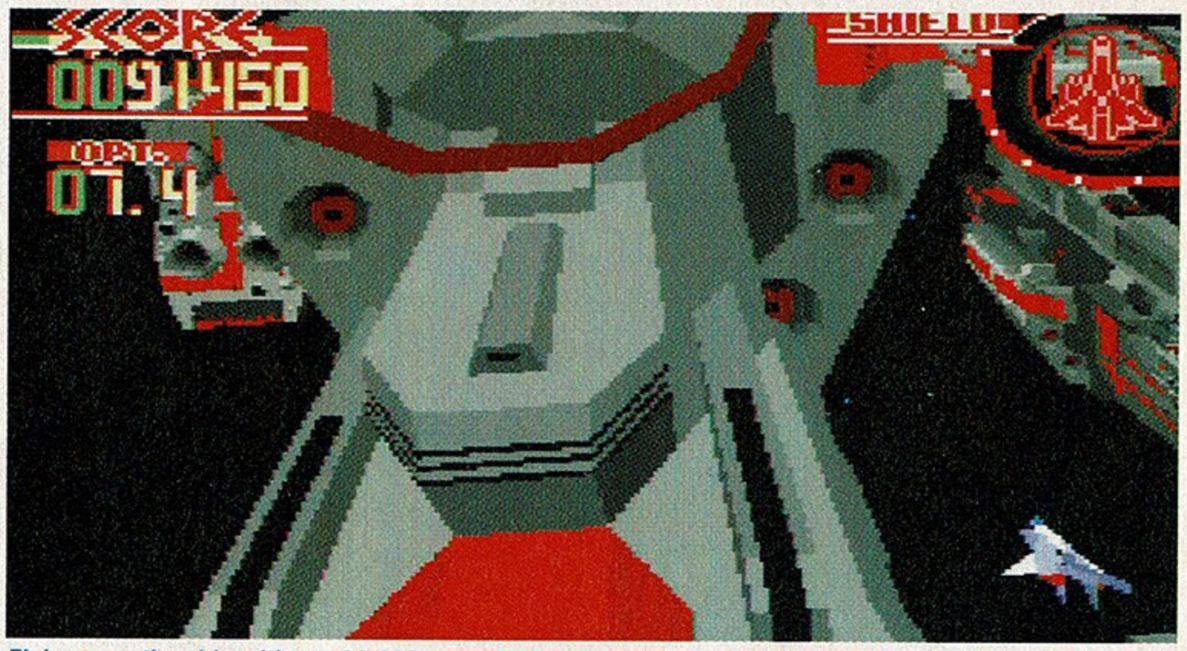
This has got to be the most over-hyped and eagerly-awaited Mega-CD title of the year so far. (We say that about every CD game, though, because we're still convincing ourselves that the next one will be decent...) Because, to all intents and purposes, along with *Batman Returns* and *Ecco, Silpheed* marks a turning point for the Mega-CD, proving that development is on the up. Mega-CD games are now being programmed to suit the hardware, and *Silpheed* promises to be the biggest exponent of it yet. Mega-CD owners, cheer up, Sega assure us that *Silpheed* will truly push your machine to its limits.

With the Japanese version released in July, importers are having a field day with the price of *Silpheed.* Prices that we were quoted ranged between £60 and £80. Luckily for us, the UK version is on the horizon (Sega promise it for September), and they reckon it should fly onto the shelves at £39.99, which is £10 cheaper than *Starwing* to which everyone has compared it. (But, to be honest, *Silpheed*'s nothing like *Starwing* – bar the polygon graphics – so they don't know what they're on about.)

Within 11 stages ahead of you, you play the role of a spaceship pilot. Your mission is to destroy a fleet of ships led by an evil green mutant whose ultimate goal is to destroy Earth. To create the massive polygon graphics used in the intro sequences for each level, and throughout the actual game, Game Arts haven't used any special chips or wizardry, they've just used the basic Mega-CD effects.

But are the basic Mega-CD effects enough to combat the Super FX chip, or are Sega putting their money on the wrong horse?

A tricky stage on the third level, these bars in space will close quickly onto you, causing extensive damage. There are about four bars in this sequence, so you have to fly forward, backward and so forth to avoid being clamped. Get ready to face incoming ships whilst flying out of this danger zone. Out of the frying pan into the fire.



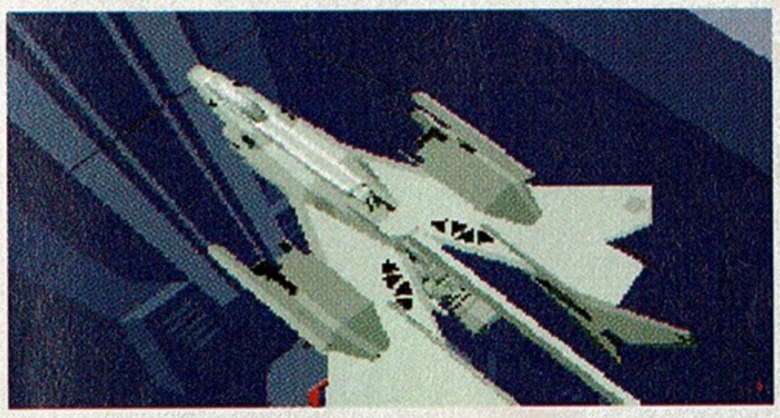
Flying over the ship with no shield is acutely dangerous. Graphically the ship looks very inviting; it's the dangers inside that are the frightening bits. As soon as you fly forward from this position three ships will lock onto you and proceed to fire. With no shield, you need to pull off some serious flying and hope that there's a repair around the corner – there is, by the way.

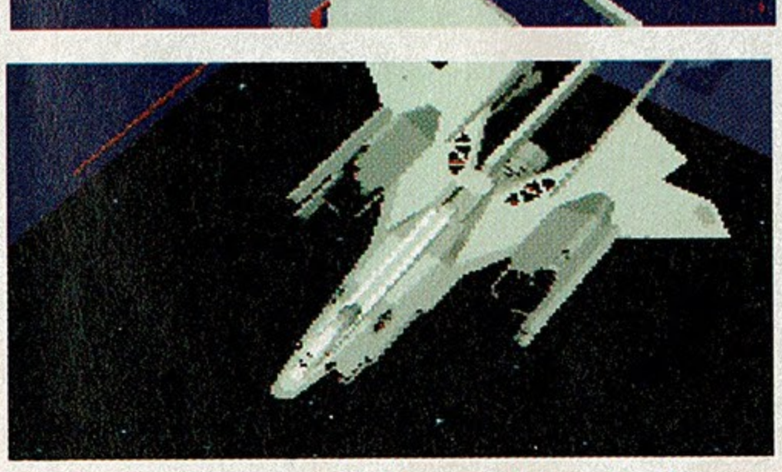
.e.e.d

OVERALL

05

Into the fourth stage and you've run out of shield. The procedure on being hit from here is weapon failure and then engine failure and then game over. By the fourth stage Silpheed starts to look considerably better, but it still doesn't hide the fact that all you're doing is shooting some more ships. Yes, it's a shoot-'em-up, but for what it promised Sega should have offered more variation, more gameplay and more control over your destiny.





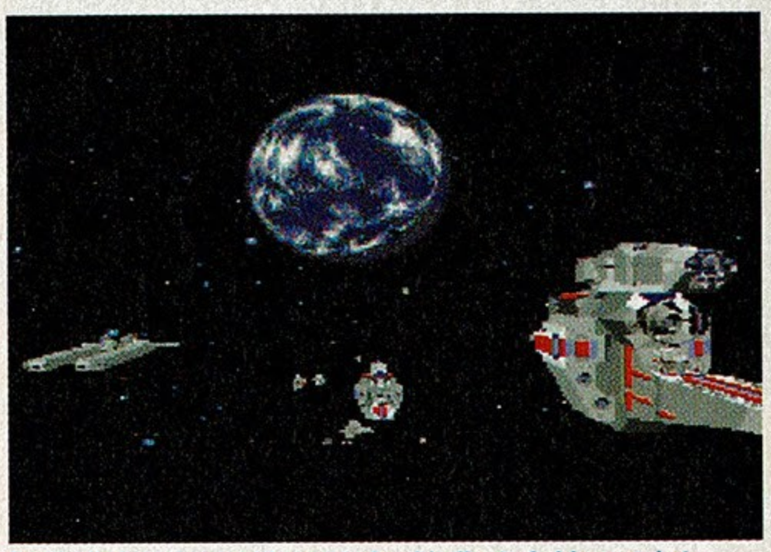
Scenes from the delicious and very effective introduction. This is undoutedly the best sequence within the game. Using a hugely effectual voice-over, the game's atmosphere is greatly enhanced. These shots convince you the game will offer something more than it does. Are Sega ever going to learn that they can put in as much intro and voice-over as they want, but without the gameplay, Mega-CD games aren't going to gravitate from the present position.

I can't help feeling a little more thought and a little less gloss would have gone a long way...

The dream was to have a game on the Mega-CD that would make SNES owners quake in their boots. The reality is that Sega have delivered a majorly disappointing game that amounts to nothing more than a glorified version of Galaga!

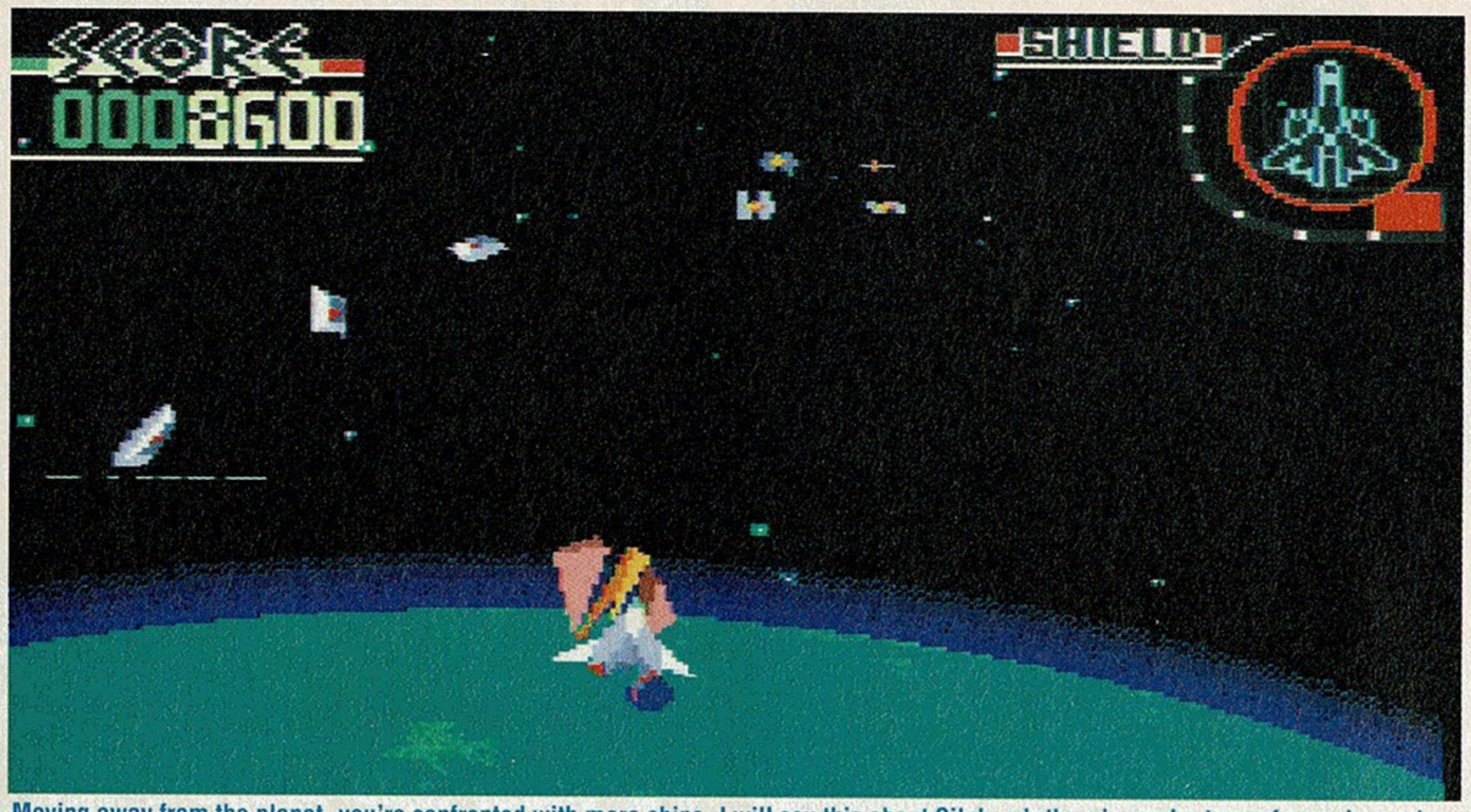
Admittedly, the intro sequence looks totally awesome, but it's nothing like the real game. The CD commentary is muffled on the story bits and constant unhelpful banter throughout the game – most of which can't be heard over the basic arcade sound effects anyway.

On the first couple of levels, Silpheed is basic – VERY basic. It is like being transported back in time to the early Eighties to some dingy arcade machine and being forced to play it again. Level four picks up a bit, but still the massive objects created by the Mega-CD hardware fail to interact enough to make them impressive. You are always forced into a specific direction, making it feel like you're watching a film where you have no control over your destiny. Admittedly,. as you get further, so the graphics get bigger and more animated. However, after seeing the first few levels, I doubt whether anyone will have the



The evil green mutant is amassing his fleet of ships ready to attack Earth. This is what you come up against throughout the game. Your objective is to destroy them all before the Earth is no longer under the threat of invasion.

NICE SHIP, SHAME ABOUT THE...

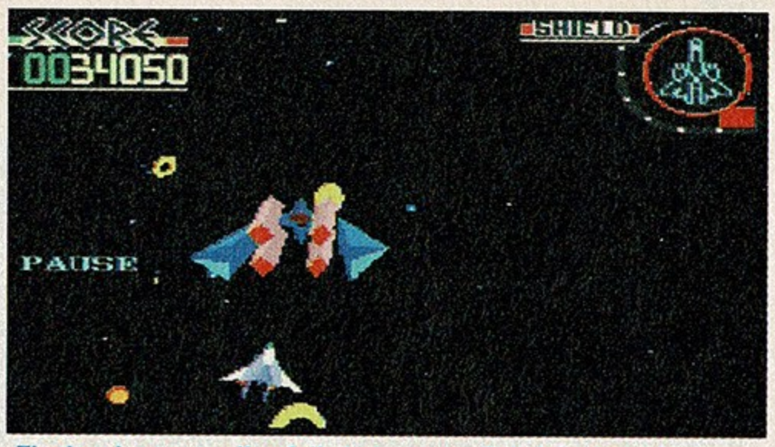


Moving away from the planet, you're confronted with more ships. I will say this about Silpheed, there's no shortage of enemies and they certainly do come in thick and fast. You only need to take about five hits for your shield to reach this point and receiving hits is going to happen a lot. With far more ships and battles to be won, you'd better make sure your flying improves, otherwise you're never going to get off the first level.

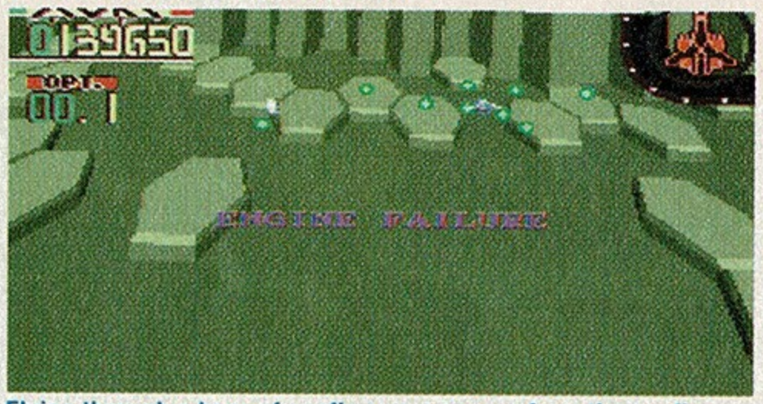
I am very disappointed with Silpheed. It's basically nothing more than a bland shoot-'em-up in space. Yes, admittedly the polygons are excellent and you do get a good perspective as you fly over various ships in space, but that's about it. The introduction, with the excellent voice-over, gives the impression you're in for one hell of a game, but it's all down hill from there.

Having one life is a real pain, even though there are continues. Playing through the levels takes a lot of time, so having to restart back at the start every time you die is incredibly frustrating. At the end of the day, Silpheed lacks variety; and if you can't have that in a CD game, then what's the point in having that massive storage medium in the first place?

STEVE



The level one guardian fails to impress. This is not overly difficult to kill, but requires some intense firing. It will fire spinning space blades which you must dodge and then avoid bullets – just keep banging away at it.



Flying through a haze of gunfire, you can see from the gunfire that I have engine failure. Just around the corner I snuffed it. Guided lasers, which are just about to launch at you, did the trick.

OBJECTS OF DESIRE

INCOMING BONUS
When you see this, blast it quickly as it will provide you with a variety of invaluable items.

YELLOW DIAMOND
This bonus will give you points ranging from 1000 to 3000. The trouble is catching them often means danger.

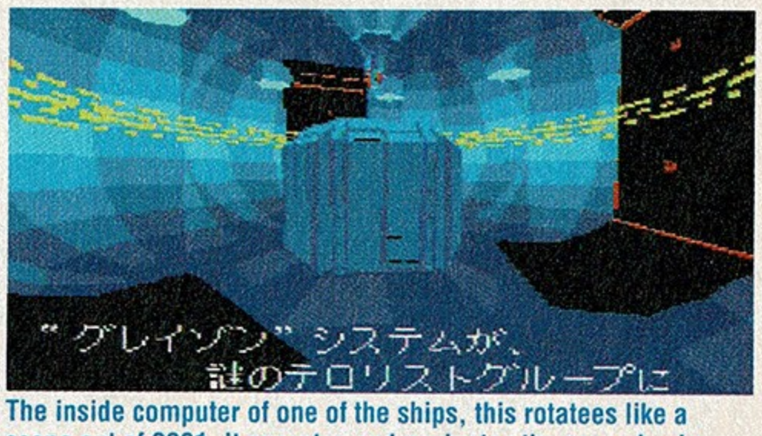
REPAIR
These repairs are the most useful items within the game, total lifesavers. Just don't miss 'em.

DESTROY
Very effective item that doesn't appear often enough. Will blow all the surrounding enemies in one go.

INVINCIBILITY
Again appears infrequently but is a great and much needed item. Only lasts for a very short period, though.

Look at the size of that thing! Once again the enemies are zooming in thick and fast so you must be quick with your reflexes. Don't ever think you get a respite from the endless barge of fire, you don't. The ship to your right is a real swine to kill, as it will follow you wherever you go. By this stage you will hopefully have obtained either an anti-matter bomb or the graviton bomb. This have a limited supply but greatly effect the enemy.

These star enemies produce a huge amount of fire which is very difficult to avoid. They also prove very hard to kill, requiring excessive firing. You'll have to contend with the fact that they're backed up by their mates.



The inside computer of one of the ships, this rotatees like a scene out of 2001. It operates and navigates the green boy's fleet of ships sent to destroy you. The CD commentary will tell you how to just how bad this ship is.

The fourth level really does look the part. The Silpheed ship in the bottom right corner (in red, as it's just been hit) must blast the ship to the right. This is a real pain to kill as not only does he fire massive amounts of lasers he also takes loads of hits. He is just about to be joined by his mates as they finally seal your fate by all blasting you into deep space. If you're clever, and you are because you buy MEGA POWER, you can encourage the ship to destroy itself. Tease it into the path of the middle laser tower and wait for it to be blown to smithereens. This is a swift little move that can be used throughout the game. Careful flying is just as important as firing a lot, because you can always avoid enemy bullets, but rarely shoot them out of the way.

As the ship blows, the effect is quite spectacular. Avoiding the lasers is imperative as they will blast you straight out of the screen. Don't be distracted by watching the clever backgrounds, because you'll die. In the distance you can make out an oncoming fleet of ships; stay to the left and fire like mad. If you have the extra weapons, like graviton or anti-matter, use them now. This is an extremely dangerous place to get caught so fight your way out of trouble. If all else fails, give up and chuck the disc out of the window – there's no way you're going to get anywhere in *Silpheed* if you can't get passed this bit.

After each level, you get to choose which weapons you want. From the left shot choose from a selection of forward beam, wide beams and phalanx beam. The latter beam is particularly good as it home in on ships as they zoom down the centre of the screen. The wide beam is reasonably effective but the ships come from head-on more than from the side. The options at the bottom offer a variety of highly effective bombs. For example, the graviton and anti-matter are powerful but rare. There is also an EDM defense system, which acts like a shield. Be warned though, it runs out quickly so don't go zooming around for too long thinking you're invulnerable.

Sometimes it becomes very fashionable in the press to completely go for a game's throat, especially when it has been hyped to the heavens as much as Silpheed has. I can only believe that Sega's over-enthusiasm about this game will be their undoing.

Silpheed is not the game we've been led to believe it is. It is not really pushing back any boundaries and it does not at any point make you drop your mug of tea in amazement. It is, however, an excellent shoot-'em-up and definitely the best the Mega-CD can offer to date. The wonderfully smooth movement of your space-fighter from foreground to background is only over shadowed by the awesome larger ships that you pass over during your unending alien-blasting, while the atmosphere of the game is nudged along nicely by the frantic speech that belts out of the speakers. Trouble is, you soon notice that you can't interact with these monoliths in any way, nor can you understand anything that is being said.

Still, there's the gameplay, eh? Well not really. After a while the continuous pattern of vector graphic ships that flail themselves ineptly in your path, become monotonous and the whole thing becomes little more than a flashy 3-D version of Galaxians. If that's what you're looking for then fine, mega death in outer space has always been enough to hook gamesplayers to arcade machines for hours and Silpheed serves this basic function very well. But I can't help feeling a little more thought and a little less gloss would have gone a long way....

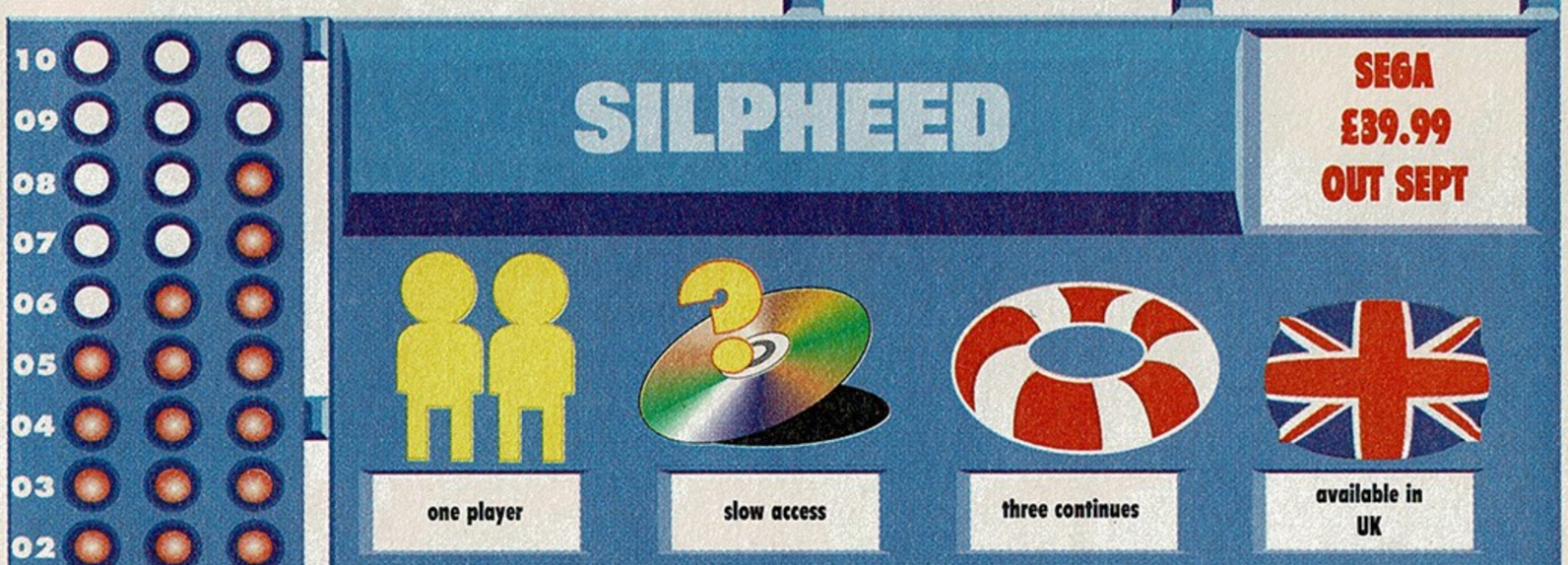
DAVE

Avoid the asteroid to the left and get ready to confront the guardian. I hope you're well prepared for all this, as you have a hefty battle on your hands.

INSTANT ACCESS

SILPHEED

SEGA
£39.99
OUT SEPT



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ADDICTION	05

OVERALL

05

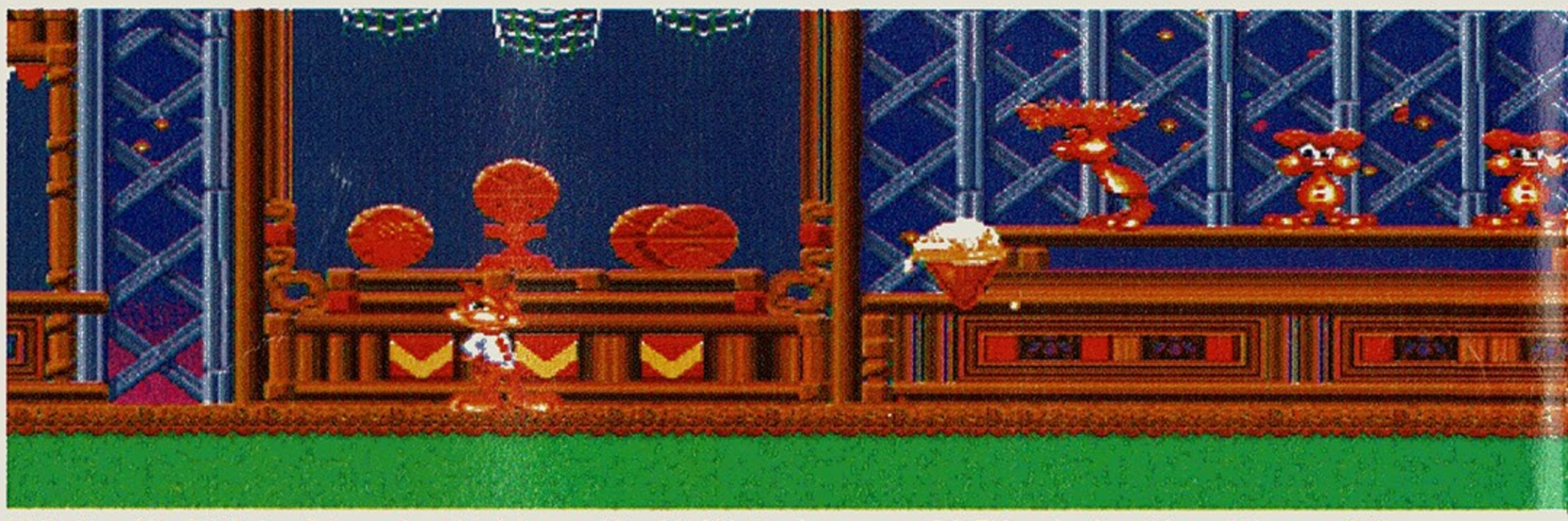
REVIEW

Bubs

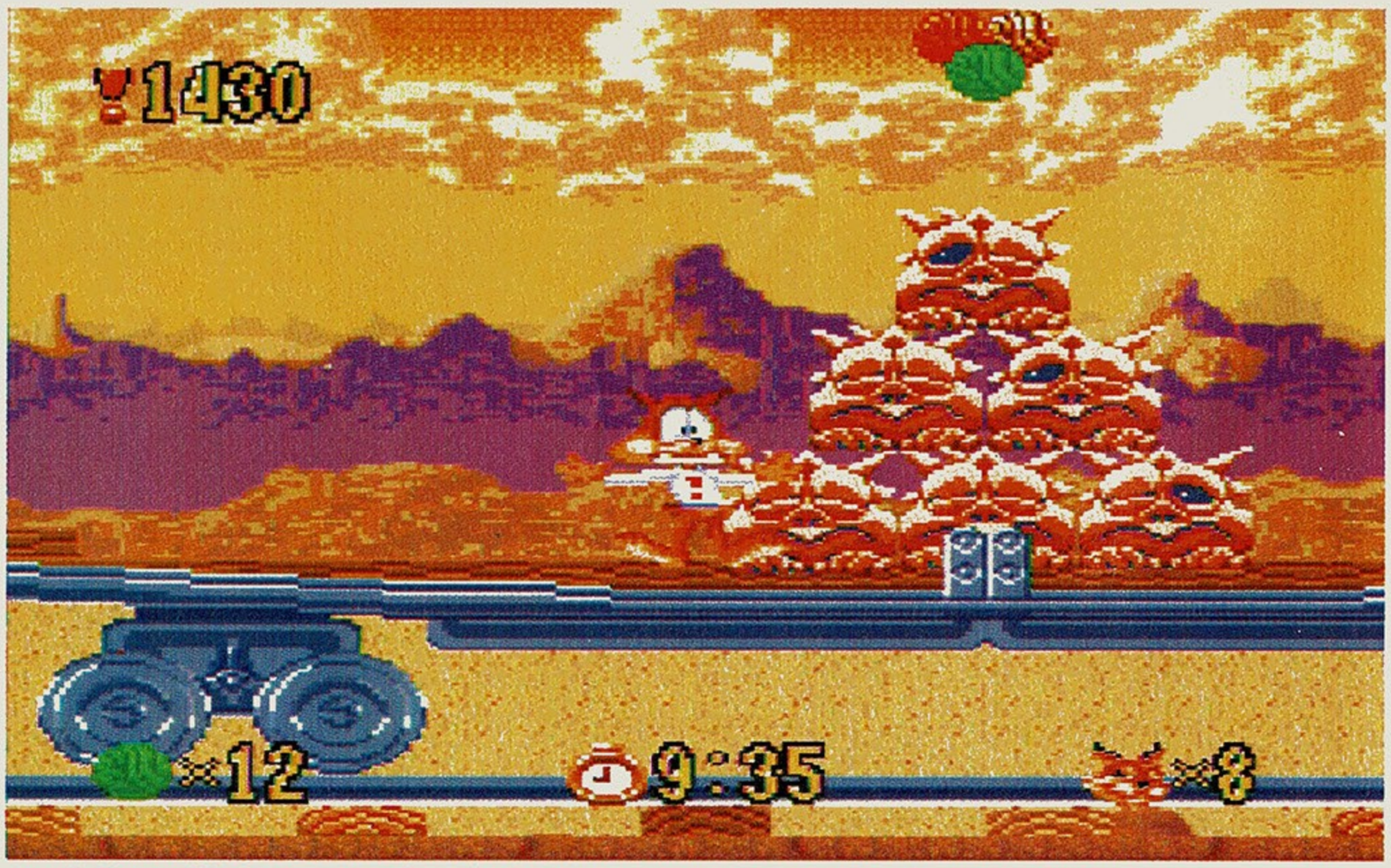
It looks fine, it's been hyped to the heavens but is there more to Bubsy than just good graphics and bad puns? Dave Perry adopts a cat's eye view over Accolade's latest offering and tries to decide whether nine out of ten gamesplayers will really prefur it.

Bubsy, as you may have gathered, is not your ordinary bog-standard bobcat, he's a cat with a mission. It would seem that the evil twin Queens of Rayon, Polly and Esther (oh dear), are attempting to steal all of Earth's balls of yarn in order to power their high fibre plasma engines. Only our feline wool warrior stands between them and a world jumper famine. Far fetched? You'd better believe it.

One of a growing number of 16Mbit titles to hit the market, *Bubsy* is a lively platform romp which takes you through 16 "chapters" of beautifully-animated yarn-grabbing fun. You race across the tops of moving trains, ride roller-coasters and slide



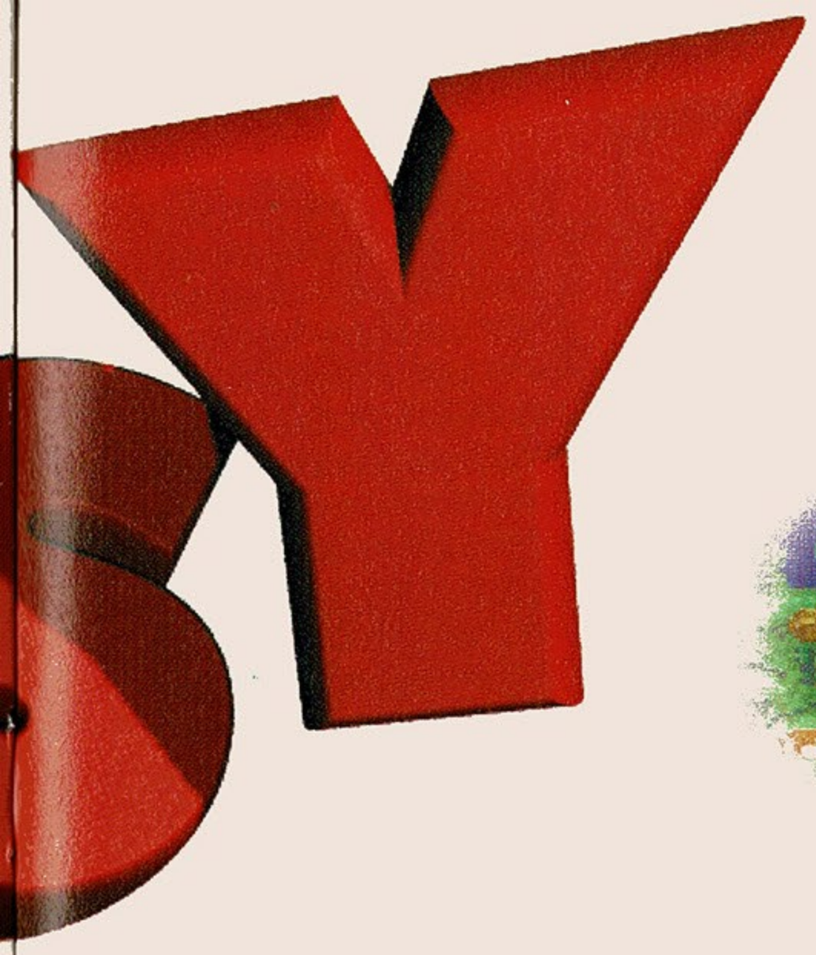
All the fun of the fair but as Bubsy enters this fairground level he'd better be very careful. Things begin getting a little more tricky from here on in. The yarn balls are quite cunningly placed so as to look like the backgrounds, the Woolies actually jump off the stalls and come after you and those appetising-looking ice-cream cones will make every attempt to freeze any careless young bobcat who happens to wander beneath at the wrong moment. As you progress up into the loftier areas of the level you will have to steal yourself and ride in a runaway roller-coaster cart as you continue that all-consuming quest for yarn.



Yowch! It's very difficult to get any real speed up in Bubsy as your way is always littered by numerous obstructions, traps and those infamous Woolies. Here our hero charges headlong into a whole pile of them and as a result finds his health very badly impaired. People have already criticised *Bubsy*'s high difficulty factor and frustration levels, but as *Sonic the Hedgehog* proved, what's the point of a game like this if it's too easy? You won't be completing *Bubsy* overnight, we guarantee it.

We fell in love with a blue hedgehog, but is it possible to fall in love with a bobcat?

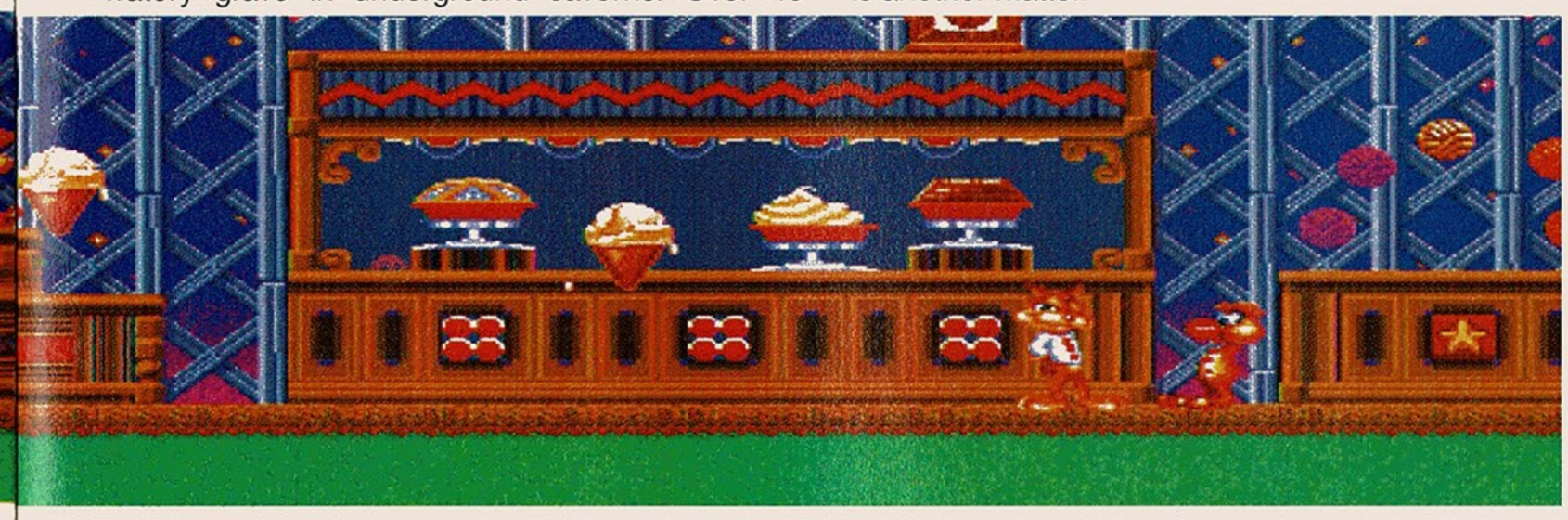
Charging through the various crates found along the way can prove hazardous if you haven't checked out their contents first. Here Bubsy has broken into a crate of bananas and as a result is sent slipping out of control towards an open manhole.



down huge log flumes in an attempt to foil the dastardly Woolies in their mission to make us all wear synthetic materials. The main sprite oozes humour as he shakes off water, grimaces in pain after long falls and even waves a little flag as he sinks to a watery grave in underground caverns. Over 40 expressions have been used to try and make Bubsy as endearing as possible and you can't help but chuckle to yourself as he engages the bad guys in a cloud of dust, claws bared and fists flying.

Speech is something you don't get very often in a Mega Drive title but Bubsy utilises digitised voices superbly with regular exclamations like "Ah-ooga!" and "what could possibly go wrong?" helping to confirm the feeling that this is a moggy with attitude. This is accompanied by an annoyingly catchy backing track that burrows its way into your sub conscious and leaves you mindlessly humming for hours afterwards – much to the annoyance of your friends and family.

It is very clear that Accolade have made every attempt to push the limits of the format as far as possible with what is undoubtedly their biggest release to date. As a result, Bubsy will be clawing his way up the console charts very soon, but whether he claws his way into your console or not is another matter.



OVERALL

08

It seems that cutesy games characters are raining from the skies these days. All claiming to be the next Sonic, all under the assumed guise of being coool. Unfortunately most of them contain all the originality of a working men's club comic and very often differ only in storyline. Bubsy at least works very hard in its attempt to find a happy medium between attractive graphics and challenging gameplay, and almost pulls it off. The game itself is, without a doubt, very difficult and would prove a worthy test for most gamesplayers but it's a little too frustrating, with Bubsy dying after only one hit. Even though there are plenty of restart points throughout the level and he always snuffs it with a modicum of panache, launching into an animated reaction to each of the various grisly misfortunes that may befall him, it gives the game an annoying stop-start feeling. Add to this one of the worst soundtracks I've heard on the Mega Drive, it sounds like it belongs on the Master System, which is not helped by the lack of decent FX throughout the various chapters.

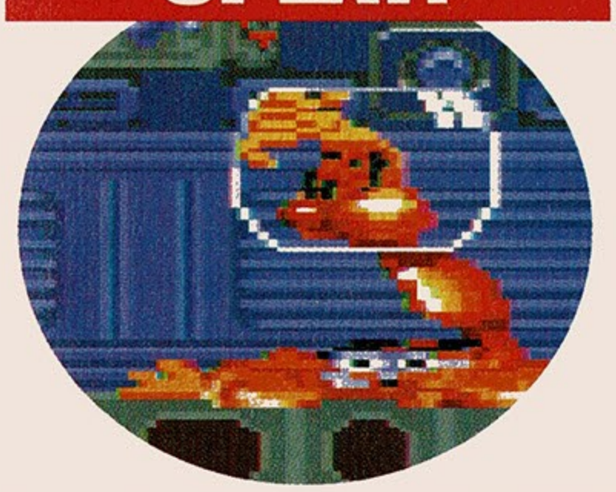
Bubsy is very playable but a long way from being a classic.

DAVE

ALL BROKE UP!

BYEEEEEEEEE!

SPLAT!

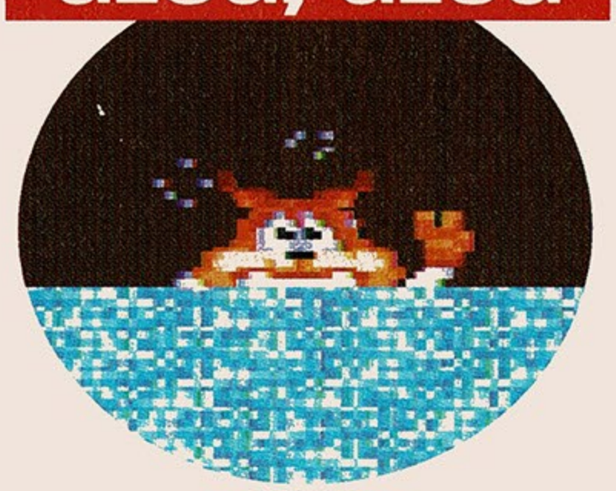


SHATTERED

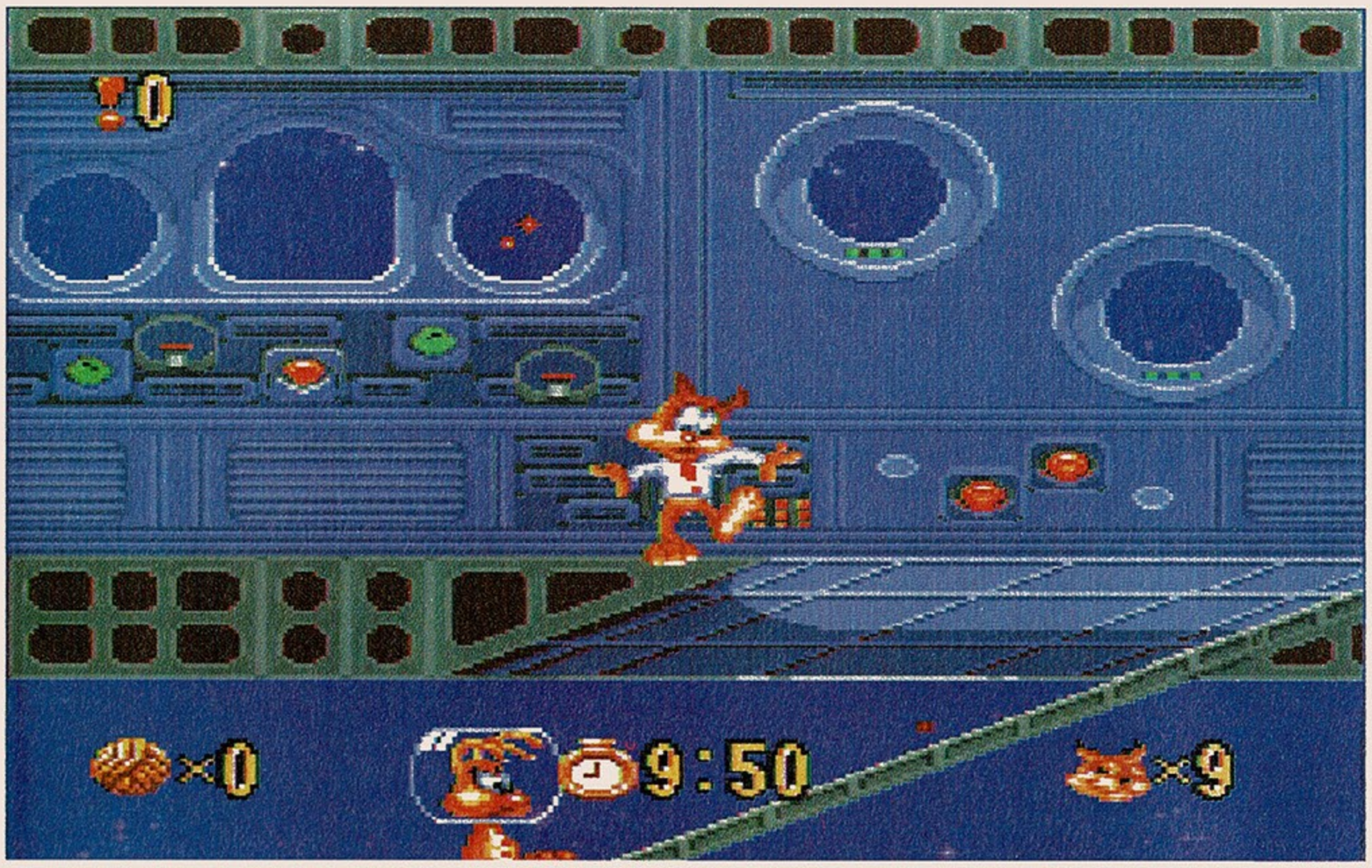
BANG!

AAARGH!

GLUG, GLUG



Death has rarely appeared as much fun as it does in Bubsy. Maybe it's because cats have nine lives but our feline forager seems to specialise in entertaining ways in which to snuff it. Here is a brief selection from the Bubsy Guide to Biting the Bullet.



Oops! Chapter 16 takes you to the Woolies' main space ship and your sternest challenge yet. You will need all your skills to jump, fight and climb your way to the end of the game. This is made even more difficult by the fact that these goldfish-bowl wearing Woolies are armed with space guns, and seeing as Bubsy can only take one hit you could find yourself tearing your hair out on this level over and over again...

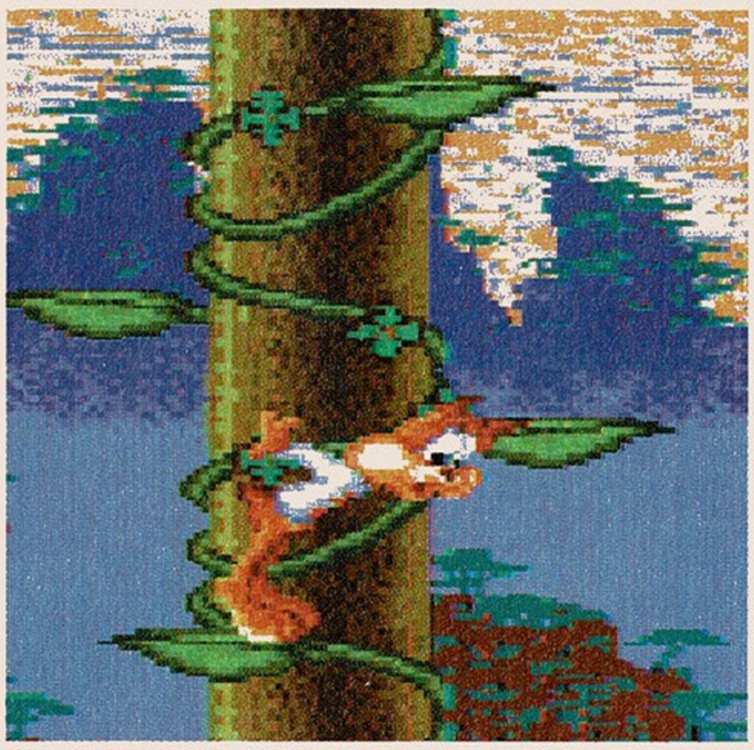
Problem-solving is not a huge part of *Bubsy* but occasionally a little bit of lateral thinking doesn't go a miss. Here an unfeasibly large jump is substantially shortened by Bubsy running on this wheel which in return rolls a bridge out over part of the lake. Hardly mind-blowing but all these little touches combine to keep the gameplay both interesting and varied.

It is immediately evident on playing Bubsy that hundreds of man-hours have gone into its development. The immense landscape is adorned with tons of strange and wonderful characters, all intricately detailed, coloured and animated. In fact the whole game is gloriously smooth and accurate, making just walking around doing nothing an enjoyable experience.

As a central character, Bubsy is great. He moves like a good 'un, flying and running with the greatest of ease. Sadly, the sly cat can also be a bit annoying at times. His worst attribute is the way he quips some crackly comment at the beginning of each go. Bubsy's also very susceptible to bashes, which means just one touch of a bad dude and you're sent back to the restart point – very infuriating.

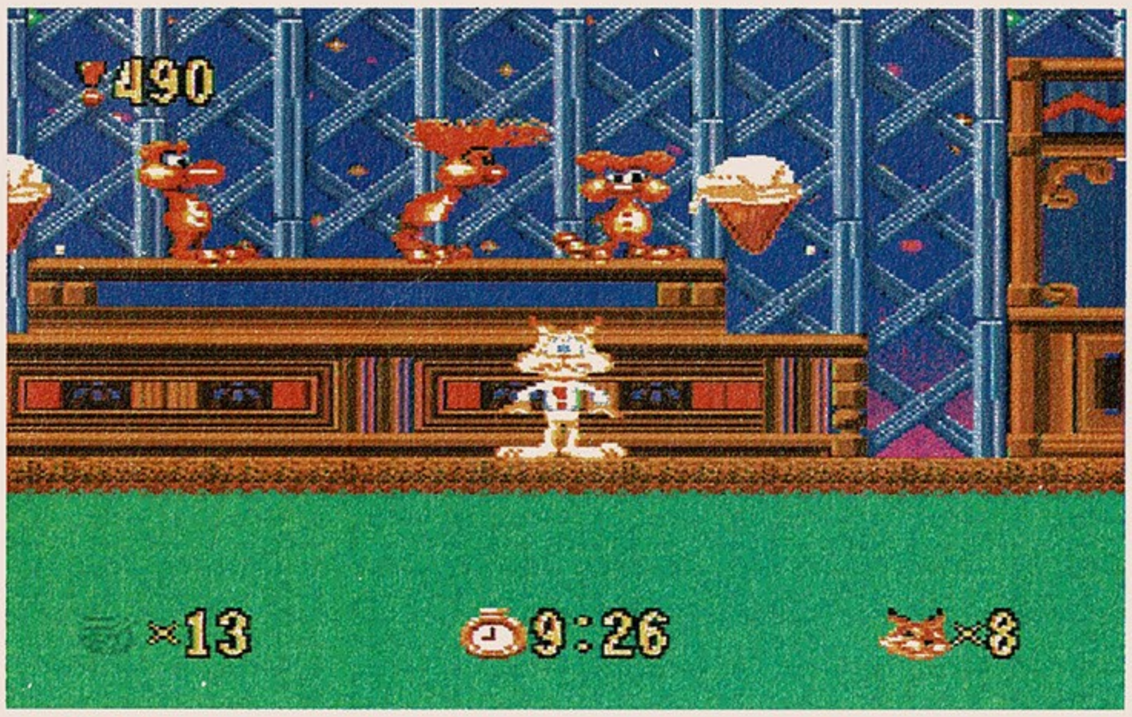
I reckon Bubsy will certainly give Sonic a run for his money. It's got all the looks, speed, excitement and charisma of Sega's son, but it's also just as big (possibly bigger) and certainly tougher. With Sonic 3's release date still up in the air, Bubsy could have the rest of the year sown up.

DOM



Whoah! Climbing large tree trunks can be a dangerous pastime. Particularly if all you have to balance upon is a number of strategically-placed vine leaves. Bubsy illustrates this perfectly as he teeters on the brink of disaster. Excellent spot animations like this add to the feeling of fun throughout.

Learning how to fly is not usually top of a bobcat's list of things to do, but for Bubsy it is essential. Holding in the A button as he falls makes Bubsy stretch out his arms and glide gracefully to terra firma. This is useful both for cushioning long falls and for guiding our little hero over various pick-ups that would be unattainable by ordinary jumping.



Brrr! Mistiming your run under one of the bobbing ice-cream cones in the fairground level can be a pretty chilling experience. It doesn't kill Bubsy but sends him into a state of skin-paling shock as he waits to thaw from the icy encounter.

ALONG THE WAY...

Throughout Bubsy you will find a number of items worth collecting. Here's a quick guide to what's what as you wander about.

YARNBALLS

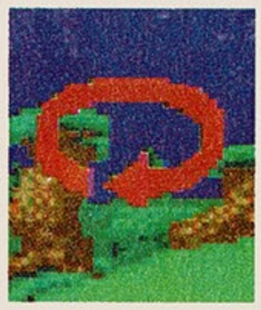
These are the main prize in the game. Collect as many as possible.

CRATES

Always check the picture on crates before jumping on them. Some hurt.

CONTINUES

These are like gold dust. Grab them straight away and if you lose your lives you can carry right on.



EXTRA LIFE

The number on these shirts tells you how many extra lives you can get by jumping through them.

SUPER SHIRT

Nice. Gain extra powers and the abiltiy to run through Woolies.

RESTART POINT

Die on a level and you return to the last restart point you ran through.

SHADOW SHIRT

Same as the Super shirt but without the ability to run through Woolies.

In each chapter you will come across a number of secret rooms. Just stroll on in but be careful, some can take you back to the start of the level whilst others can shower you with bonuses.

Bubsy is a very simple game to play. To give you an idea of just how simple here is a breakdown of the basic screen features.

1. This is your score for your performance in the game so far. Apart from the obvious boost provided by collecting yarn balls you also gain extra points by wiping out Woolies.

2. The whole point of your mission throughout the game is to collect all the yarn balls you can. Here is where your total catch on the level is counted.

3. There is a time limit for all levels of ten minutes and it is very important to keep an eye on this clock while you shoot around collecting yarn balls.

4. Throughout each level you will find that you lose a lot of lives as Busby can only take one hit. Keep an eye on the number of lives left and always claim extra lives on the screen when you can.

We fell in love with a blue hedgehog, but is it possible to fall in love with a bobcat? The answer from me is a resounding yes! Accolade have used to full effect the benefit of having a loveable rogue as the star.

As platform games go, Bubsy's brilliant. Packed with colour and resplendent graphics, the game itself brings happiness and joy to the player. The sound and speech used within the game is very funny, as are the sequences when Bubsy dies. It's not just your normal splat, Bubsy always dies in some spectacular fashion, which certainly brings a smile. I wouldn't say was the hardest I've played but there's so much to this game, that you'll find it equally challenging exploring the huge areas available to Bubsy.

This game is a winner. It makes a refreshing change to actually have a laugh whilst playing a game. You can be sure of one thing, if you're feeling down in the dumps, pick up Bubsy, he'll soon brighten your day.

STEVE

INSTANT ACCESS

REVIEW

Rocket Knight adventures

Steve Bough straps on a rocket pack, extinguishes all cigarettes and flies through the skies with the greatest of ease...

Staking in tune after their last loony adventure, Konami have put Buster Bunny to one side for a moment while they build up another cartoon character. *Rocket Knight Adventures* is a whizzing platform game that promises the finest in galactic humour. Konami, famed for their arcade conversions (remember *Nemesis*?), have always concentrated on making their Sega games enjoyable to play, vis-à-vis *Turtles, Sunset Riders* and *Tiny Toon*. The protagonist of their latest escapade, an ultra-cool mole called Sparkster, is the wackiest of the lot.

Oh, Sparkster, have you been changing the lightbulbs again? Nope, the reason everything's turned red is that you're about to be engulfed in flames. Two groups of flames fly overhead. Each one is made up of three flames, which can usually be predicted by staying up the top to tempt the flames, then dropping down below when the hot stuff appears onscreen. All the time, keep moving along the platform or you'll get squashed by the scrolling landscape.

But Konami know these cute 'n' cuddly characters can soon get nauseating, which is why they also enlisted the help of arcade and SNES programmers for the development of the Mega Drive version. Konami say it was imperative for them to create a character that would still appeal no matter how many times you played it. Folk like Sonic, Alex Kidd and James Pond have proved that many games can be developed around one character, so Sparkster wasn't to be a flash in the pan.

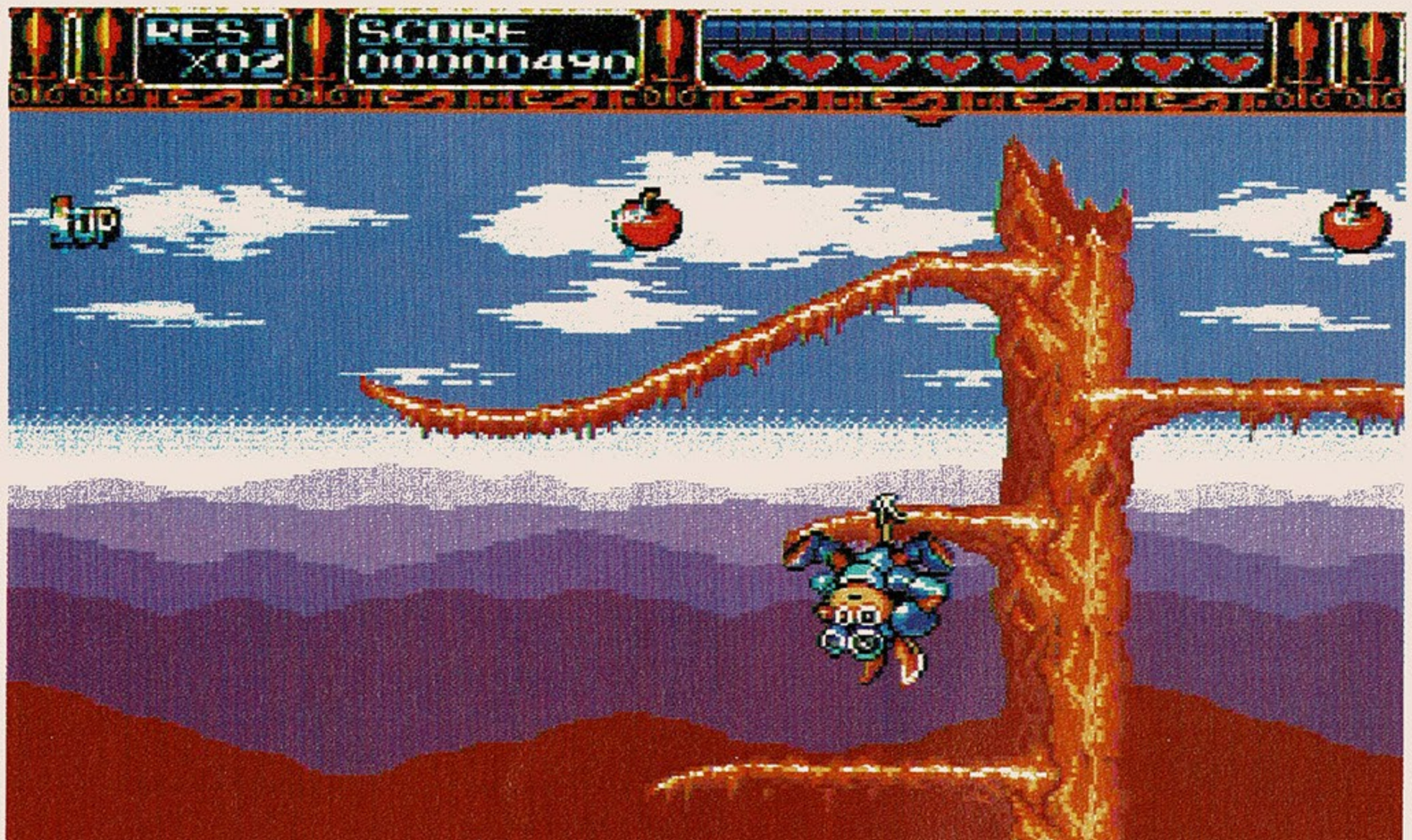
However, their original approach failed to extend to the somewhat predictable storyline. Sparkster's domain, the land of Elhorn, was once a sickly, bubble-gum chewing, fairy-frolicking sort of place. The whole place was even thermastatically-controlled via a mighty weather satellite in space, called the Pig Star. Luckily for us, one of the rulers got a bit sick and tired of the whole halcyon world and bug-

I'm not ashamed to admit it, I really like platform games. I thought Tiny Toon Adventures was brilliant and Konami haven't let me down on this one. Rocket Knight Adventures is an exemplary game. Yes, it is a bog-standard platform with the usual six levels involving at least three big stages per level, but it's not what is there, it's the way it's done. The graphics are extremely colourful and detailed, and Sparkster's animation is marvellous.

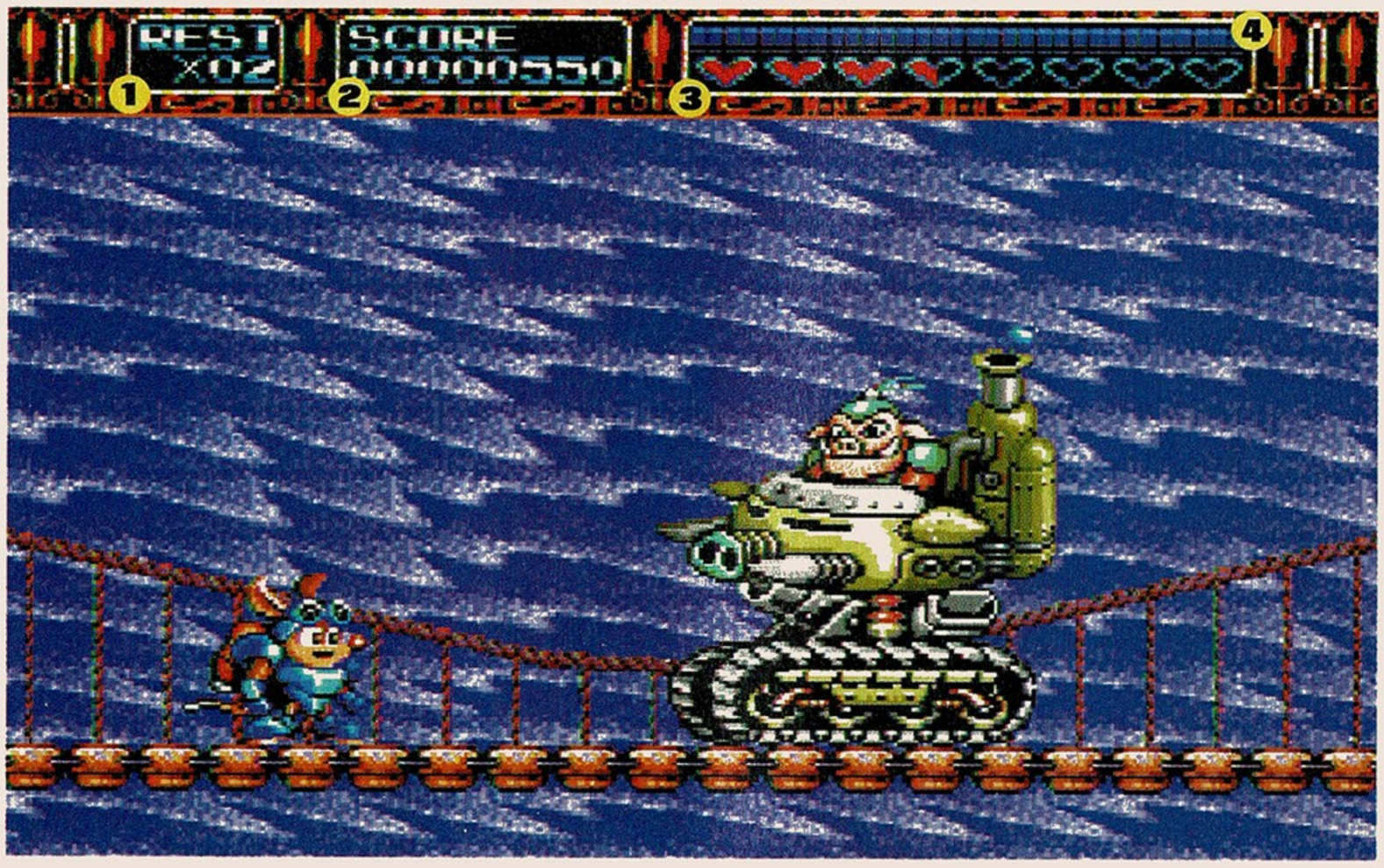
One thing I particularly liked about Rocket Knight is the fact that it is difficult. It's pretty rare to find games with a challenge nowadays, but I must admit to being truly stumped at some parts of Sparkster's adventure. Yes, it was frustrating, but I always felt as if the next go might just do it.

This is a great follow-up to Tiny Toon Adventures, and considering its durability, well worth the asking place.

STEVE



Sparkster's just hanging around, admiring the view on the first level. There are a load of juicy bonus items up this tree. For instance, just look at that extra life in the top left-hand corner. Find an apple on the tree and it'll add an extra heart to your energy. Moving around the tree isn't easy though. Care needs to be taken on the curly branch above as it's quite likely you'll slip off. If you do, use your rockets to get immediately back up the tree.



As you can see here your way is blocked by an evil porcine ogre. He'll fire bombs and flames at you, so use your rockets and shoot from behind – always keeping an eye on the indicators at the top of the screen...

1. Rest (of your lives). In this instance Sparkster only has two, so he'd better tread carefully or there will be no more rocket adventures for him. Don't fret, though, Sparkster has plenty of continues.

2. Okay, so we didn't score many here, but it's only the start of the game. Anyway points don't mean much, although you get them for dead enemies and odd items. Forget all that, though, and worry about your own skin.

3. Energy is crucial in *Rocket Kinght*. Keep your eyes on this bar at all times. When you're down to a couple of hearts remaining, you'd better find some more (see Pick Your Own) or else it's curtains.

4. This is your rocket indicator. Hold down button A or C to build it up. When the bar flashes white, you know you're ready to fly. Just point Sparkster in the right direction, let go of the button and watch him fly.

I challenge anyone not to have immense fun while playing Rocket Knight Adventures.

gered up the Pig Star. As if that wasn't enough, he also killed off his fellow rulers and now towers mightily over the land of Elhorn.

Now, personally, I can see nothing wrong with the set-up as it is, but a small group of rocketeers want to revert back to the sickly planet and have vowed to avenge the death of the other rulers. Their plan is to send one of their party through the six areas of Elhorn, find this rebellious chap and give him a good telling off. Personally, I'd give the guy a medal and kill the rocketeers...

OVERALL

09

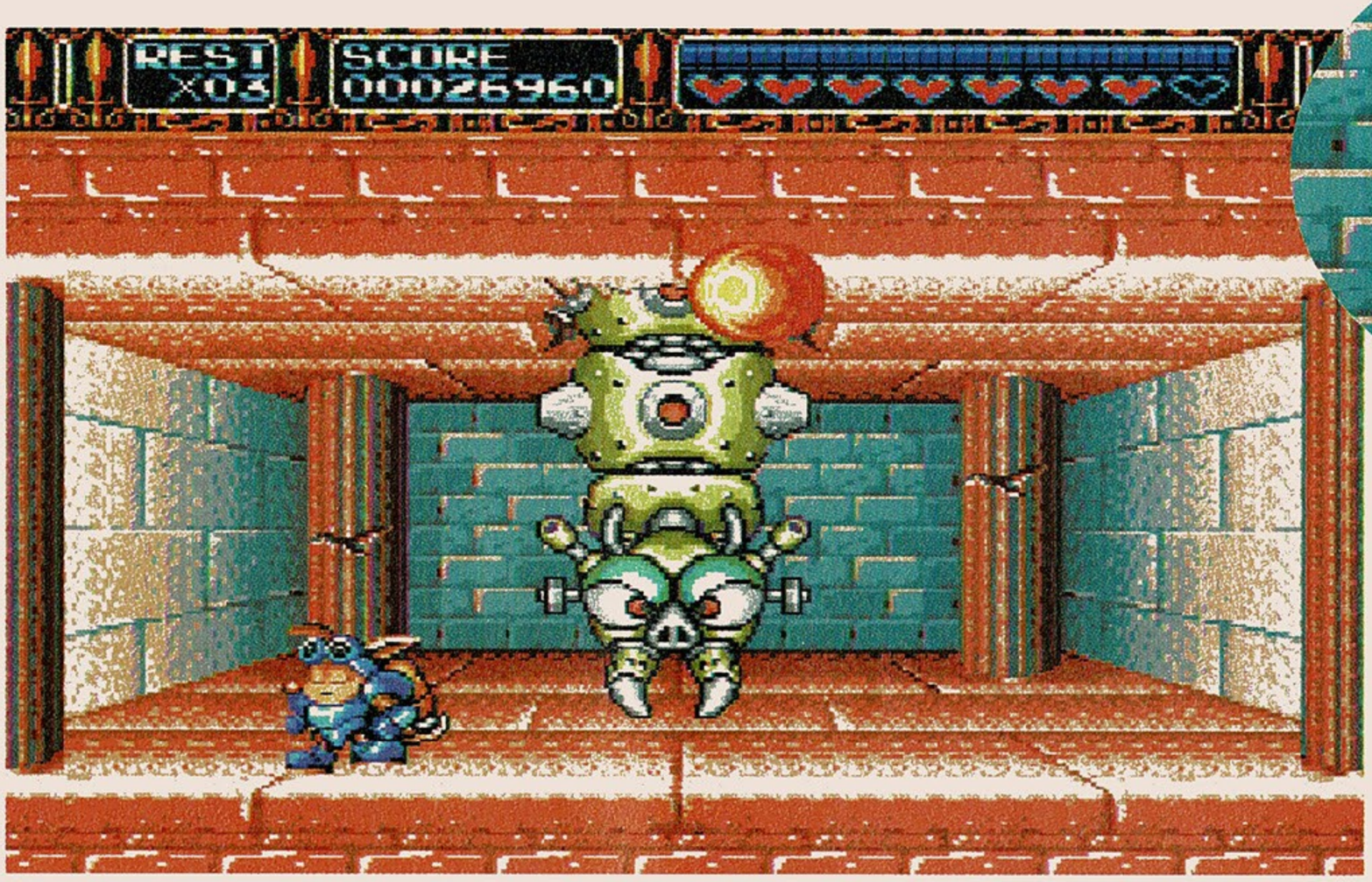
Okay, I know what you're thinking: how did Sparkster get up those platforms? It's very ingenious, actually. Because he can't get the right angle to fly up the steps in one jump, Sparkster must use his rocket pack to slam into the wall in a zig-zag.

Must admit I didn't much fancy reviewing this one; I've seen enough cutesy platform games to last me a lifetime. However, after five minutes of playing I began to notice something very special about Rocket Knight Adventures... it has gameplay, tons of it! The longer you play, the more you begin to appreciate how wide and varied this game is. There are flying screens, runaway coal train scenarios and countless mini-puzzles to overcome, not to mention the constant flow of increasingly tougher guardians.

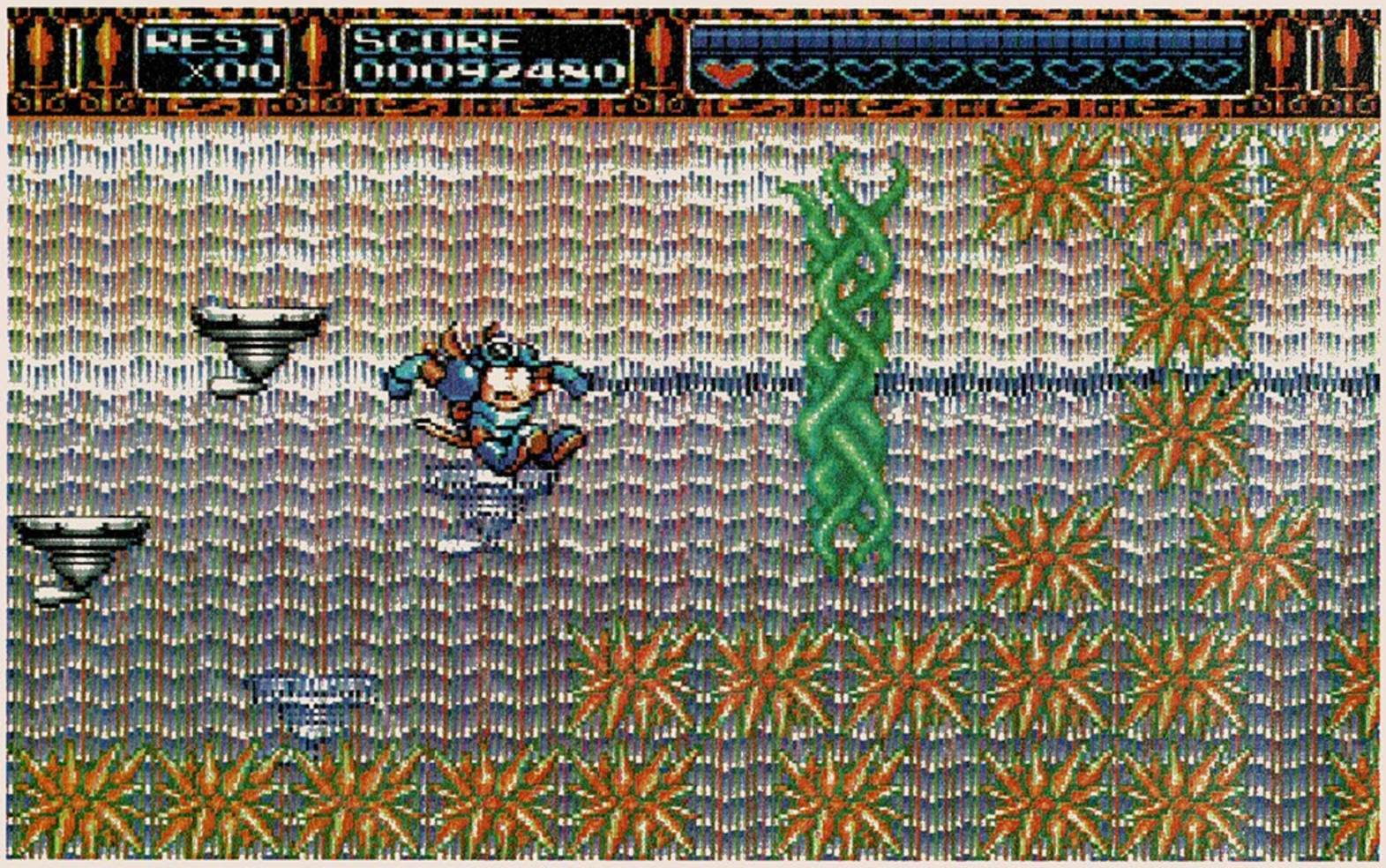
Graphically this may not appeal to a wide range of gamesplayers. It is not as polished as games like Cool Spot or Sonic but it is hugely original and many of the levels use the visuals to help improve the gameplay aspect rather than hinder it.. For example, on one level you cannot see the main sprite and have to use his reflection in the rising water to help you jump across the platforms.

This is one for gaming purists who fancy an enjoyable challenge.

DAVE



Get to the end of the first level and this is who you'll meet. If you thought the first level was tough, you ain't seen nothing yet. This guardian is a real swine. Jump up and hit his mutant arm when it breaks through the centre of the ceiling. Then it'll pop down on the left and right, hoping to catch you off guard. But it's not just that, it also deposits numerous spiders which must be jumped over. Amongst these arachnids, you'll see one red guy who must be shot to complete the stage.



Once again Sparkster finds himself in a whole heap of trouble. This time he comes up against a particularly nasty mutant snake. Use the platforms to jump through the water and reach the line in the background. This is the only effective method of avoiding the spikes. If you slip off, you're guaranteed to lose a few hearts of energy, and you'll need all the energy you can get to beat the snake monster as he slithers in the fore- and background trying to hit you.

I challenge anyone not to have immense fun while playing Rocket Knight Adventures. Konami have done a tremendous job in taking all the old, highly-successful games from yesteryear, mixing their best elements together and updating them for the Nineties.

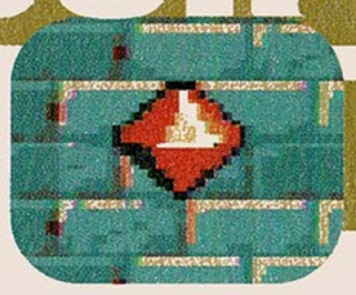
It's hard to know where to start with its praise. Yes, the graphics are incredibly colourful and vivid. Yes, the aural attack is non-stop. And, yes, the difficulty level is set just right. But none of these elements is any more impressive than any other. It is the complementary gelling of all these individual elements that gives Rocket Knight that indefinable draw that all great games possess.

If you've ever enjoyed games like RoboCod, Ghouls 'n' Ghosts or even Sonic, then Rocket Knight Adventures is something that should definitely be on your shopping list.

DOM

PICK YOUR OWN

Ah, the glorious extra life. I can tell you, these are a life saver as this game eats lives faster than a hungry Raptor.



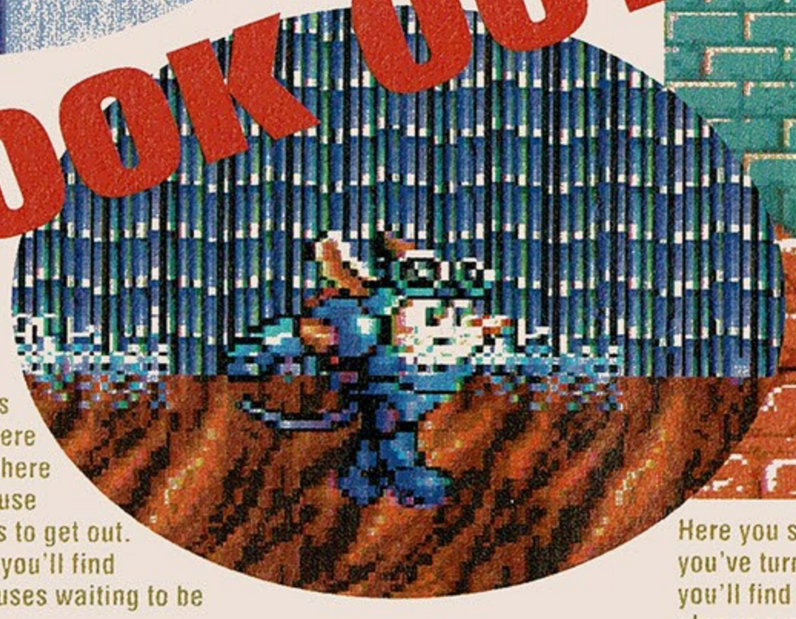
Red diamonds – no, not the team in *J League* – have the same effect as the apples, although they are very limited.

A juicy red apple, this delicious Cox's Pippin will fill up your energy hearts – one per apple. They also clean your teeth...

These bananas boost your energy with four hearts at a time. Keep your eyes peeled as they are often hidden.

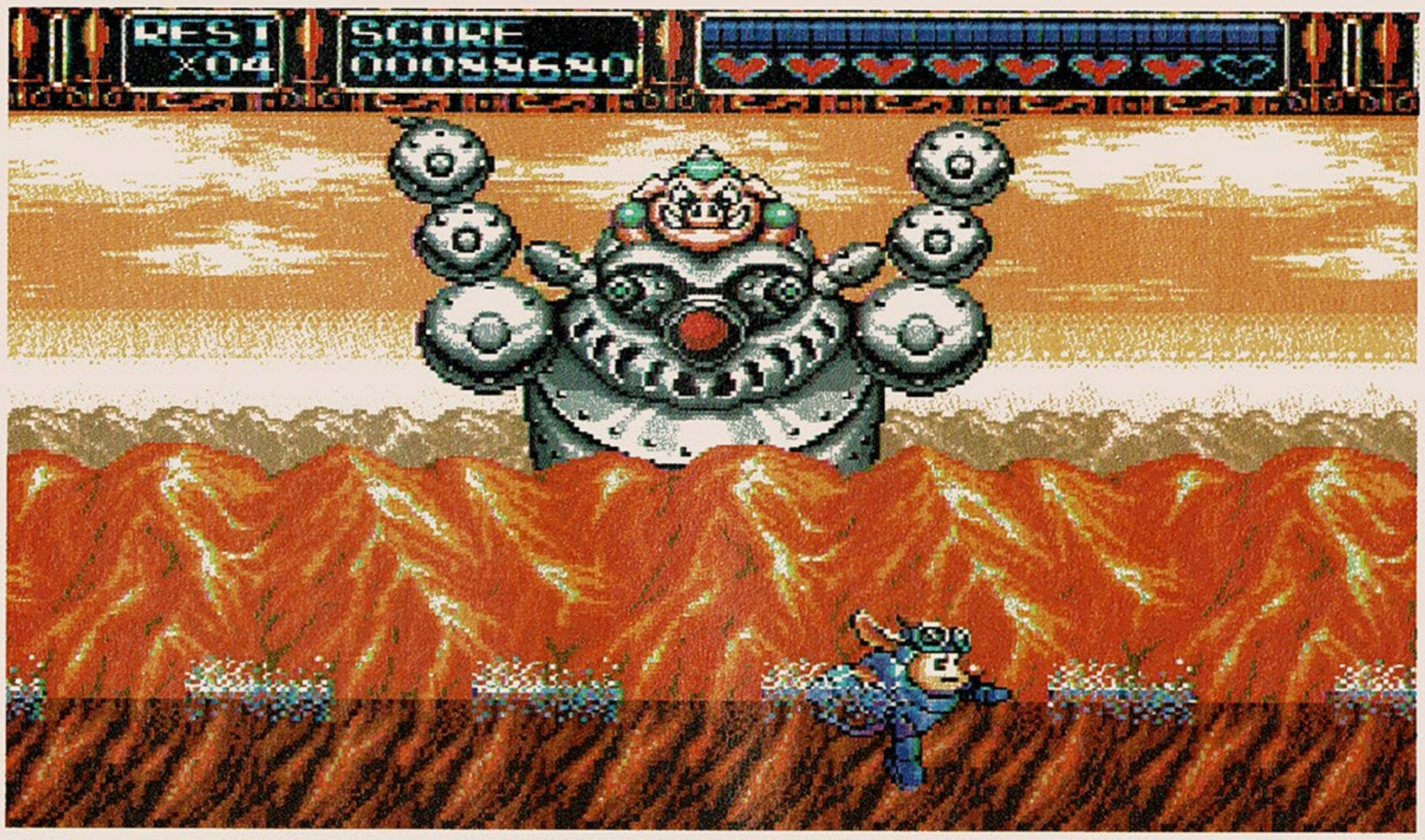
Rocket fuel allows you to fly at high speed and altitude for as long as it takes to defeat the oncoming dangers of pig soldiers and sea monsters. Poor, poor Sparkster...

No, he's not hanging onto anything, Sparkster's flying through the air with the greatest of ease. Sometimes the little guy will go too fast and bang his head – poor chap.



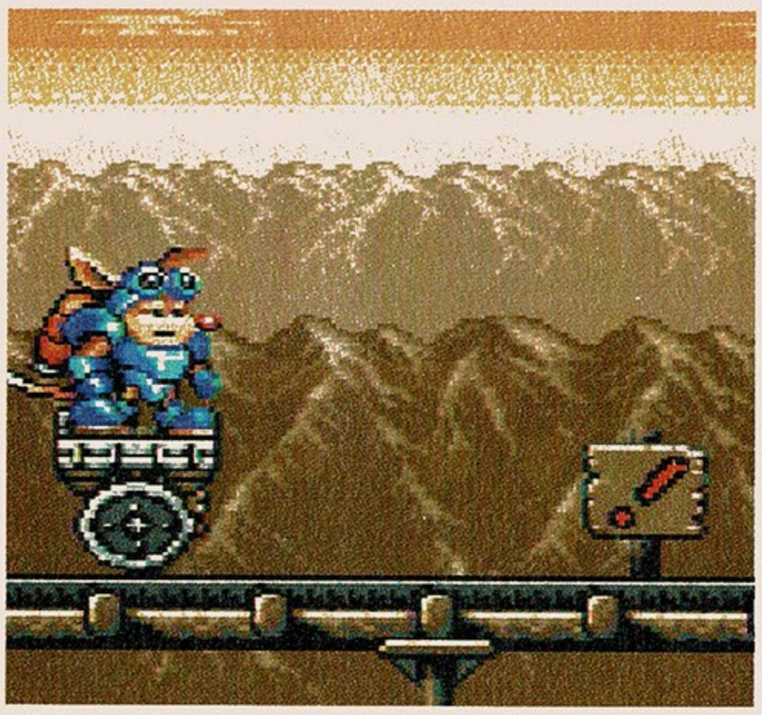
In situations like this where there's nowhere else to go, use your rockets to get out. Quite often you'll find hidden bonuses waiting to be collected.

Here you see Sparkster coming face to face with a flaming pig. Deal with this weird freak by slashing him with your sword. After you've turned him into roast pork, you'll face the obstacle of a pit of flames. It's not a tricky jump, but don't go too mad otherwise you'll find yourself burning your backside. As you go through the underground maze, take care not to rush into anything as trouble is always around the next corner.



At the *start* of this sub-stage, you have to defeat this goon – and you haven't even entered the stage yet! The flailing arms can easily knock your head off, so keep cool and duck below water if the going gets tough. When you've mustered up the courage, get Sparkster to leap out of the water and fire at the red blob in the centre of the metallic creature. This guy does require some sort of technique but spotting his method is very difficult.

Sparkster is an excellent knight, but is he is a mole, vole, mouse or rat? As he encounters this mound, there's no way under it (obviously, he's not a *burrowing* mole), so flick the switch and use your rocket pack to zoom over.

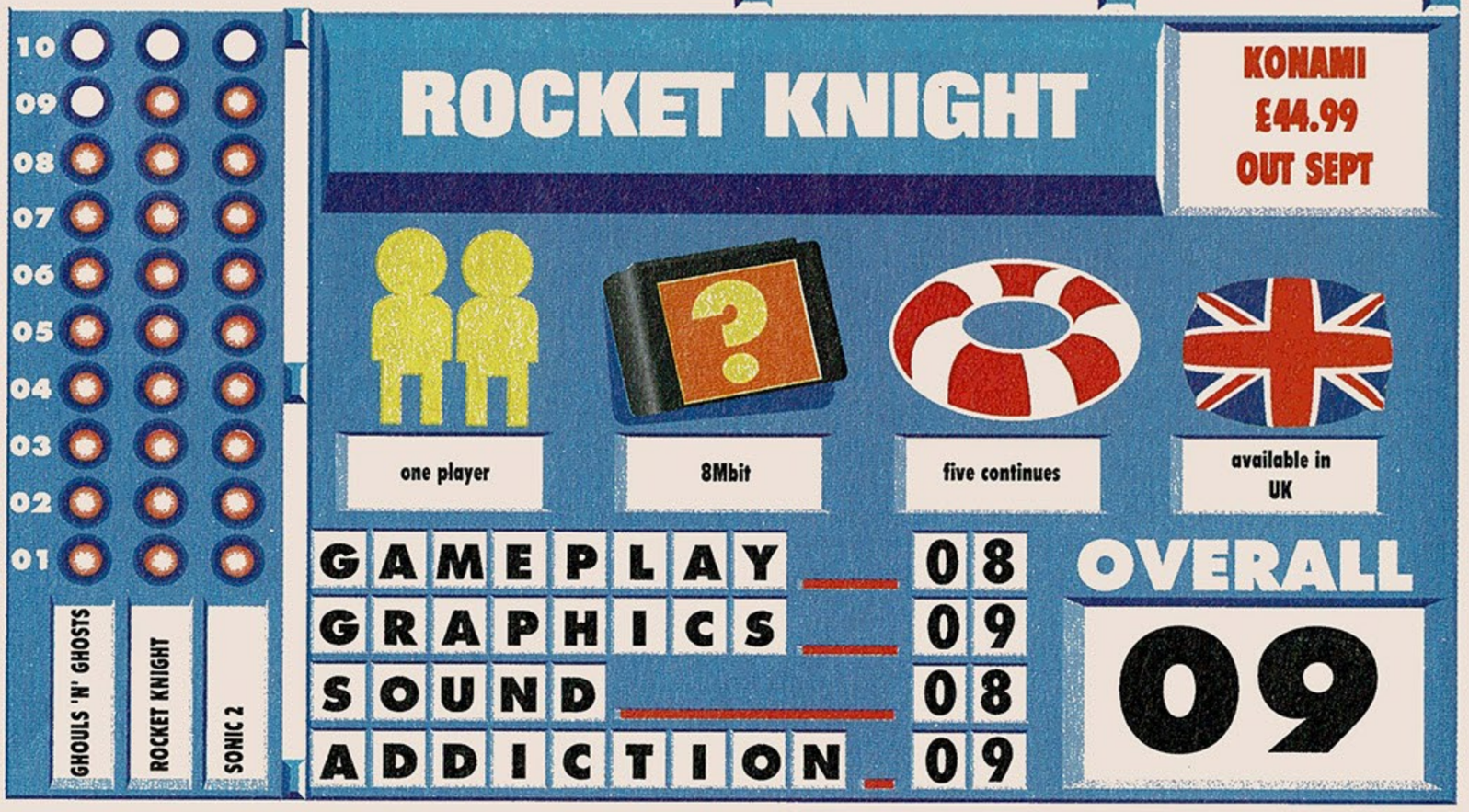


That sign isn't there for decoration, something big's coming up. Here Sparkster's just about to zoom along a railroad track. Above him lies some scaffolding which Sparkster must duck under if he wants to retain all his lives.

INSTANT ACCESS

ROCKET KNIGHT

KONAMI
£44.99
OUT SEPT



REVIEW

MORTAL KOMBAT

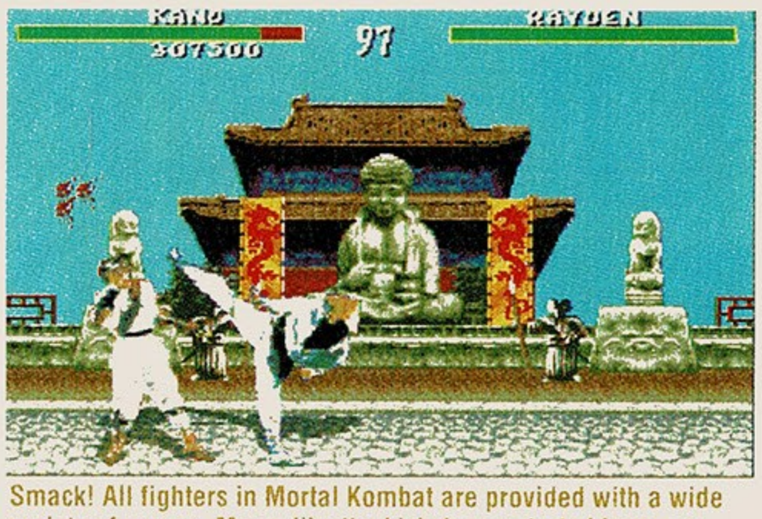
Bored of waiting for the much-revered Street Fighter II to make its dubious appearance on the Mega Drive, Sega owners now have a new champion, Mortal Kombat. Dave "the dragon" Perry takes a fishing junk to the East China seas to find out what all the fuss is about.

Ever see Enter the Dragon? That old Bruce Lee movie where all the world's top martial arts experts go to some remote temple and fight to the death in order to find a supreme champion. Well, this is as near as you'll get to actually playing out that scenario. You must take control of a brave warrior as he competes in the infamous Shaolin tournament against several equally mysterious opponents for the title of grand champion. But beware, this is no ordinary competition. Fighting against you will be gods, lost souls, a movie star and ultimately a 500-year-old four-armed champion named Goro.

Comparisons with *Street Fighter II* are inevitable. Both games served the same apprenticeships in the arcades before coming to console, both games will appeal to the same target audience and on the whole you might as well be playing the same game as far as general gameplay goes. The primary difference lies in the graphics. *Mortal Kombat* sports some of the most impressive digitized graphics ever seen on the Mega Drive. All the moves were filmed from real actors and the characters leap, lunge and fly incredibly smoothly, which ensures that the action is always kept turned way up.

I know, what you're thinking: "What about the gore, the blood, the death blows?" Well, unfortunately for *Mortal Kombat* – fortunate for sales, though – the game has attracted a large amount of unwanted attention for its violent content. This has been treated tentatively by leaving the nastiness out of the game unless you type in a particular code – which is, theoretically, only available to over-18s who contact Acclaim direct. A bit of a case of sitting on a particularly fragile fence methinks. With the said code inputted the game is certainly taken onto a new plain of bloodletting. You can rip out your opponent's heart, tear his head off, even make his head explode. Nice.

Whether or not this is the fighting game Mega Drive owners have been waiting for or just a taster before the release of *Street Fighter II* remains to be seen. One thing is for sure, *Mortal Kombat* is here now and it's taking away some of the limelight from Capcom's bruiser.



Smack! All fighters in Mortal Kombat are provided with a wide variety of moves. Many, like the kick demonstrated here, are universal. However, not all kicks and punches suit all fighters as strength and speed vary from character to character. Eventually you'll find a fighter that suits your style of play.

Yes, yes, yes. This is the kind of game I want to play. Action, violence, attractive graphics and ear-splitting screams. Oh yes, this has all the addiction of Street Fighter II without the fiddly complexities. And, when all the snobbery is stripped away, this is basically the same game. All right there are a number of differences between the two but most of those are purely cosmetic. Street Fighter II fans will, I'm sure, point out that the special moves take more skill in their particular game but I'm not really sure that it's a plus point. Mortal Kombat fans will be able to reply that at least the fighters are more evenly matched. We all know there are only two fighters really worth choosing in Street Fighter II, right?

Blood-thirsty? No more than in the fight scenes contained in The Immortal and nobody bothered about that. Make no mistake, this is the best scrap you can have on the Mega Drive to date.

I was amazed at the quality of the digitized fighters and the speed of their moves. I was also suitably impressed by the crunching sounds emitted as bone shatters bone and flesh tears flesh. If there is a bad point about this game it has to be the drudge of a tournament in one-player mode. You fight all the other fighters, then you fight them twice... and so on until you meet the champion Goro. Very unimaginative.

I know Street Fighter II was first, I know Mortal Kombat has borrowed a lot of its ideas, but it has used them well and produced a quality game in return.

DAVE

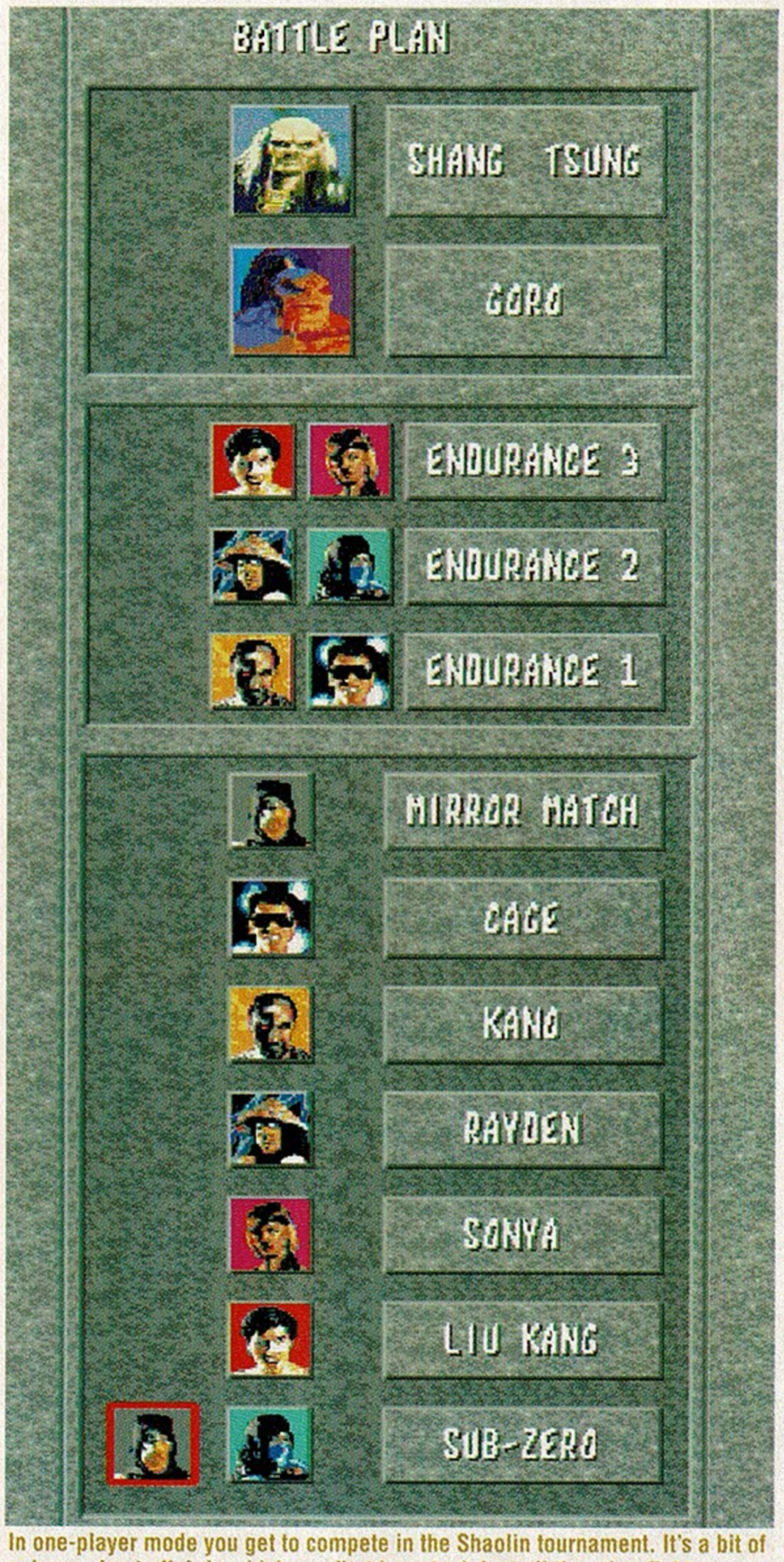
...al bat

...even with the gore factor turned off, Mortal Kombat is still a brutal game.

OVERALL

08

As you progress through the game, you are given frequent opportunities to earn bonus points by karate chopping your way through slabs of wood, stone, iron and, eventually, diamond.



In one-player mode you get to compete in the Shaolin tournament. It's a bit of a dragged out affair in which you first have to defeat all the other fighters over three bouts, then fight a duplicate of yourself in a Mirror Match and then once again all the others but this time two at once in a test of your endurance.

Having finally pummelled your way through all of these bemuscled obstacles, the real challenge is only just beginning as you now get to face the 500-year champion Goro and, should you find that little more than a slapping match, the grand master of the tournament Shang Tsung. If at any point you lose a match you simply replay it again until you run out of continues.

The greatest challenge you face in Mortal Kombat is your ultimate battle with Shang Tsung. He's a wily old fighter and uses his special spiritual powers to fire horrific fireballs at you and to metamorphose into any one of your previous opponents, including yourself, at any time he chooses. You can be sure that this will be a thrilling contest but one that you should win as you have already beaten everyone but Shang Tsung in previous rounds.

Here are the magnificent seven for you to choose from. All of these fighters possess their own special moves and unique history for those armchair samurai who like to really empathise with their character. These special moves combined with the fighter's own strength and speed dictate how he will fight. For example, there would be little point in trading speed slaps with Liu Kang, who is very fast indeed, if you are the slow but strong Kano. A powerful uppercut would be more advisable.

As you play, it's fun to spot the similarities between the characters and various Hollywood martial arts stars.

your move, punk!

The best part of any fighting game is undoubtedly learning and executing all of the flashy but deadly special moves. Here is a brief description of the main characters and their moves within *Mortal Kombat*.

CAGE
A MARTIAL ARTS SUPERSTAR TRAINED BY GREAT MASTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD
CAGE USES HIS TALENTS ON THE BIG SCREEN. HE IS THE CURRENT BOX-OFFICE CHAMP AND STAR OF SUCH MOVIES AS DRAGON FIST AND DRAGON FIST II AS WELL AS THE AWARD WINNING SUDDEN VIOLENCE

SHADOW KICK
Cage launches himself into a high speed karate kick.

FLAME BLAST
A lethal long-range weapon and good for weakening opponents.

KANO
A MERCENARY, THUG EXTORTIONIST THIEF - KANO LIVES A LIFE OF CRIME AND INJUSTICE
HE IS A DEVOTED MEMBER OF THE BLACK DRAGON, A DANGEROUS GROUP OF CUT-THROAT MADMEN FEARED AND RESPECTED THROUGHOUT ALL OF CRIME'S INNER CIRCLES

SUPER SPIN
A bull-dozing special move but easy to block and counter.

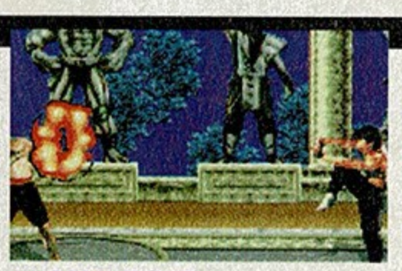
SPINNING BLADE
This takes more energy when blocked than any other move.

RAYDEN
THE NAME RAYDEN IS ACTUALLY THAT OF A DEITY KNOWN AS THE THUNDER GOD
IT IS RUMORED HE RECEIVED A PERSONAL INVITATION BY SHANG TSUNG HIMSELF AND TOOK THE FORM OF A HUMAN TO COMPETE IN THE TOURNAMENT

TORPEDO
Fly at your adversary and shove him into a wall. Effective.

RAYDENTRICITY
Shock them into submission with a blast of pure energy.

LIU KANG
ONCE A MEMBER OF THE SUPER SECRET WHITE LOTUS SOCIETY, LIU KANG LEFT THE ORGANIZATION IN ORDER TO REPRESENT SHAOLIN TEMPLES IN THE TOURNAMENT
KANG IS STRONG IN HIS BELIEFS AND DESPISES SHANG TSUNG



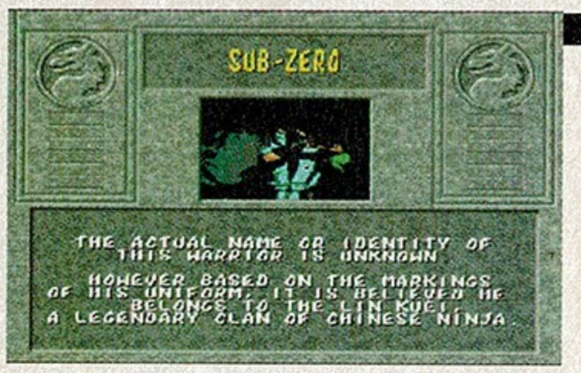
FLAME BOLT
Use this to drain energy before getting close or using the...

CONCORDE KICK
Fast, powerful and almost impossible to block. A winner.

SCORPION
LIKE SUB-ZERO, SCORPION'S TRUE NAME AND ORIGIN ARE NOT KNOWN
HE HAS SHOWN FROM TIME TO TIME DISTRUST AND HATRED TOWARDS SUB-ZERO
BETWEEN NINJAS, THIS IS USUALLY A SIGN OF OPPOSING CLANS

SPEAR
Great. Drag your opponent to you then knock his block off!

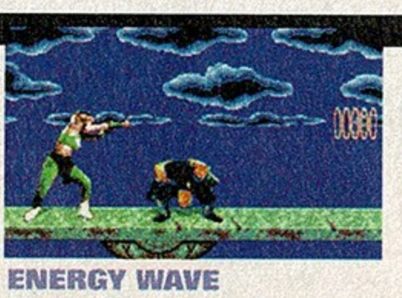
TELEPORT PUNCH
Flies off one side of the screen and reappears with a punch.


SUB-ZERO
THE ACTUAL NAME OR IDENTITY OF THIS WARRIOR IS UNKNOWN
HOWEVER BASED ON THE MARKINGS OF HIS UNIFORM, IT IS BELIEVED HE BELONGS TO THE LIN KUEI, A LEGENDARY CLAN OF CHINESE NINJA

ICY SHOT
Freeze your opponent for four seconds and take your best shot.

POWER SLIDE
A useful little trick but more annoying than powerful.

SONYA
SONYA IS A MEMBER OF A TOP U.S. SPECIAL FORCES UNIT. HER TEAM WAS NOT ON THE TRAIL OF KANO'S BLACK DRAGON ORGANIZATION.
THEY FOLLOWED THEM TO AN UNCHARTED ISLAND WHERE THEY WERE AMBUSHED BY SHANG TSUNG'S PERSONAL ARMY.



ENERGY WAVE
Circles of energy are flung towards your opponent.

LEG TOSS
Grab your enemy with your ankles and slam him down.

Well, being a big fan of Street Fighter II, I approached this game with some trepidation. At first I thought, pah, this is nothing special, but the more I played it the more I got into it. As you begin to the learn the huge variety of moves for each fighter, you'll be suitably impressed. The digitizing of the characters is effectively done; not only do they look superb, they actually move with the greatest of ease. The backgrounds aren't going to have you weeping in ecstasy, but who cares, you're there to fight, not look pretty. As with SF II, the moves do take time to learn, but once you've got them off pat, you'll be justly rewarded. Some of the moves incorporated within the game are frighteningly good, like Kano ripping his opponent's heart out – nice one.

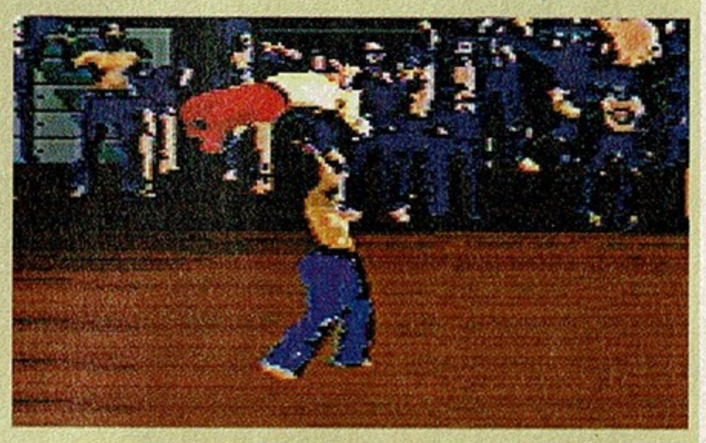
With the realistic blood, booming sound effects, and gruesome death moves, Mortal Kombat presents only one problem: do you buy this or wait three months for Street Fighter II?

STEVE

Fight me...

PIT-FIGHTER

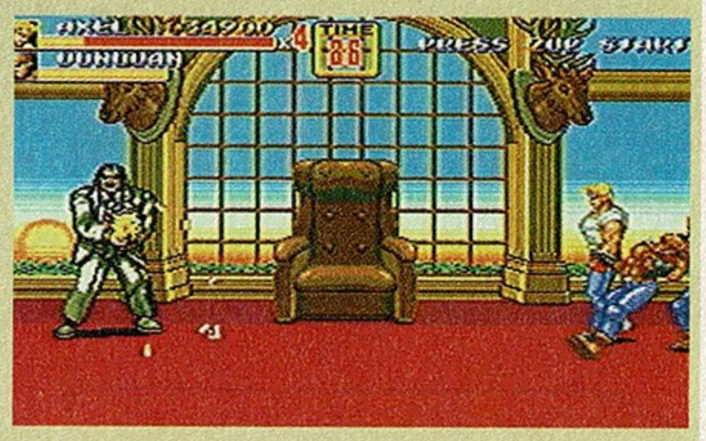
Released: January 1992



Its risky attempt to convert digitised graphics from the arcade machine to the console made this a very brave and exciting cart indeed. Full of attitude, weapon-throwing and karate-kicking, Tengen's *Pit-Fighter* was a great game to play at the time. However, it now all seems a little jerky and dated, with the dodgy attempt at displaying the changing size of the characters when moving from background to foreground leaving a lot to be desired. For all that, this is still a classic beat-'em-up and worth a place in any collection if you can get it for the right price.

STREETS OF RAGE 2

Released: January 1993



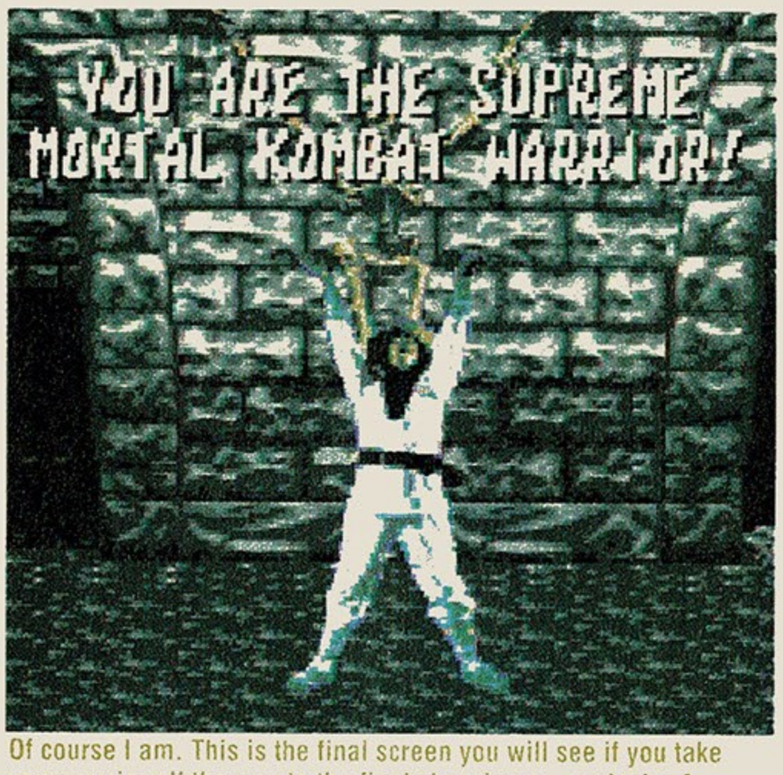
People slagged the original *Streets of Rage* because it was too short and too easy – but with few decent beat-'em-ups on the Mega Drive, everyone agreed it was the best they could hope for. The sequel contained a new character, a skateboarding kid called Max, and plenty more levels to progress through. The sprites were much larger and the animation just as fluid, which quickly made it the new Sega champion. However, it still suffers the same inherent problem as the first: it is just too darn easy to get to the end of the game, even in one-player mode.

to the death

Mortal Kombat has achieved its notoriety as a result of its high gore factor. The real icing on this brutal, blood-filled cake are the individual death-blows. These can be instigated at the end of each match. Marquis of Queensbury it ain't.

No quarter shown here as Rayden teaches his mirror image a thing or two. Paracetamol are not going to be much use now as thousands of volts of Raydentricity are pumped into his hapless counterpart's body ultimately causing his head to explode. Very fatal!

I don't think there is any doubt who won this match. Scorpion is a fearsome opponent and if you should fail to beat him he will whip of his hood, reveal his ghoulish features and then belch flames on you, reducing you to little more than a charcoaled shadow of your former self.



Of course I am. This is the final screen you will see if you take your warrior all the way to the final showdown... and win. A classic example of good conquering evil and MEGA POWER taking on all-comers. Now all that's left to do is to keep practising and fine honing those winning combinations and patiently wait for *Mortal Kombat 2* to appear. That's the problem with being too clever. you're constantly waiting for the world to catch-up.

Beat-'em-ups on the Mega Drive have never really impressed me – only Two Crude Dudes stands out for its sheer stupidity. Streets of Rage was always far too easy, and the limited amount of moves meant even a one-on-one battle was boring. With Mortal Kombat, though, Acclaim have done the impossible and produced a Sega beat-'em-up which looks and sounds great but also retains all the playability and challenge of anything on any other console – even SF II!

Within the very limiting confines of the Mega Drive's colour palette, the programmers, Probe, have done wonders with the arcade's digitized fighters. The characters are detailed and smoothly animated, which improves the player interaction immensely. And because all the fighters are fairly evenly matched, everyone can pick their favourite character without knowing that one or two fighters are going to dominate the contest.

If you're looking for the action-packed, adrenaline-pumping, blood-splattering of the arcade version, you will definitely find it here. (And even with the gore factor turned off, Mortal Kombat is still a brutal game.)

DOM

Although Shang Tsung is the final warrior you will face, there can be no doubt that the hardest task you will undertake comes when you fight Goro. The 500-year-old, four-armed, undefeated champion is wonderfully animated and both incredibly fast and fearfully strong. There isn't much room for mistakes when you face this brutal monster.

(Right) Liu Kang can only wince in pain as Kano gives him a Glasgow kiss. This head-butt is Kano's close-quarters special move. All fighters possess these, for Liu Kang it is an elbow blow. Note the amount of blood flying around; you only get it with the gore code which is... (oops, run out of space)

INSTANT ACCESS

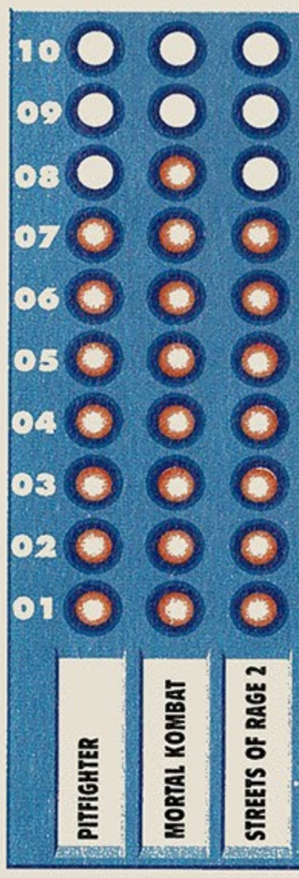
MORTAL KOMBAT

ACCLAIM
£49.99
OUT SEPT

1-2 players	16Mbit	none	available in UK

GAMEPLAY	09
GRAPHICS	08
SOUND	07
ADDICTION	08

OVERALL 08

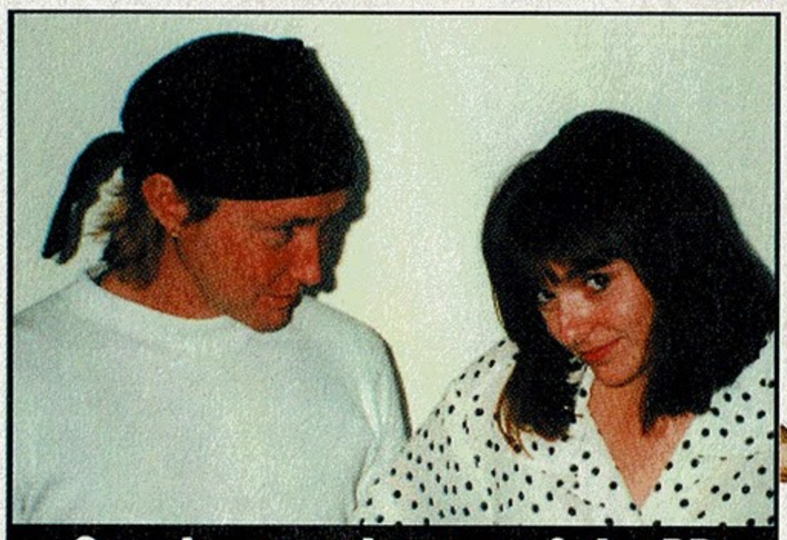


POWER

challenge

THE CHAMP

Name:.....Dave "The Kid" Perry
Representing:.....readers' interests
Position:.....highly-underrated
Age:.....old enough to know better
Favourite MD game:
.....NHLPA Hockey (still)
Most favoured game in challenge:
.....none of them
Special abilities:
performing Chun-Li lightning kicks on the office walls



One down – the rest of the PR world to go. They've been queuing up to bring The Kid to his knees this month. The unlucky recipient of the merciless Perry wrath with her job on the line this month is the highly vociferous Caroline Stokes, Virgin Interactive Entertainment's queen of quibble. We soothed her down with a pizza and a can of beer as she prepared to take The Kid to the cleaners...

RULES

Three games produced by the software house the guest is representing.
One game to be chosen by the challenger.
One game to be chosen by The Kid.
One game as yet unseen by both players.
Each player is informed of the other's game one week prior to the contest.
Each game is played until one player has won two contests.

CHALLENGER

Name:.....Caroline AE Stokes
Representing:.....Virgin Interactive Entertainment
Position:.....PR Executive
Age:.....21
Favourite MD games:
.....Jungle Book, Desert Strike
Most favoured game in challenge:
.....Cool Spot
Special abilities:
..cracking her own jaw; surviving a Pizza Land chilli pizza

RULES

Cool Spot
One game.
Special rules: quickest time to collect 60 cool points and release Spot's caged mate.

Muhammad Ali's Championship Boxing
One game.
Special rules: ten technical knockouts in one round, or first to stay on the canvas.

Speedball 2
Best of five.
Special rules: only allowed to pep up whole team, not individuals, before the matches.

The Kid's choice
SPEEDBALL 2
Having recently discovered *Speedball 2* in the depths of a cupboard, Dave has been brushing up his brutal footballing skills day and night in preparation for the challenge. He originally perfected the art of Speedballing on his beloved Amiga, but has since honed his skills on the improved UK Mega Drive version. The game is basically football using players kitted out in rollerball suits. The action is fast and brutal, with players pummelling into each other at high velocity. There are no rules, and plenty of ways to increase your points. Ultimately, if you know all this game's intricacies, the game will reward you.

Caroline Stokes' choice
COOL SPOT
Confident Caroline boasted before the challenge that she was Virgin's official world champion at *Cool Spot*. A brave statement considering the company she was keeping. Caroline also made sure that she had a major advantage on *Spot* by promising to send The Kid a version to practise on, but failing to deliver till the day of the challenge. *Cool Spot* is possibly Virgin's finest-looking release to date. Programmed by Dave Perry (no, not *our* Dave Perry, the American one!), it utilises all the brilliant animation of his previous game, *Global Gladiators*, and combines it with some very innovative gameplay. As The Kid himself said: "Only the coolest will survive in hell – and that's where I'm sending Stokes!"

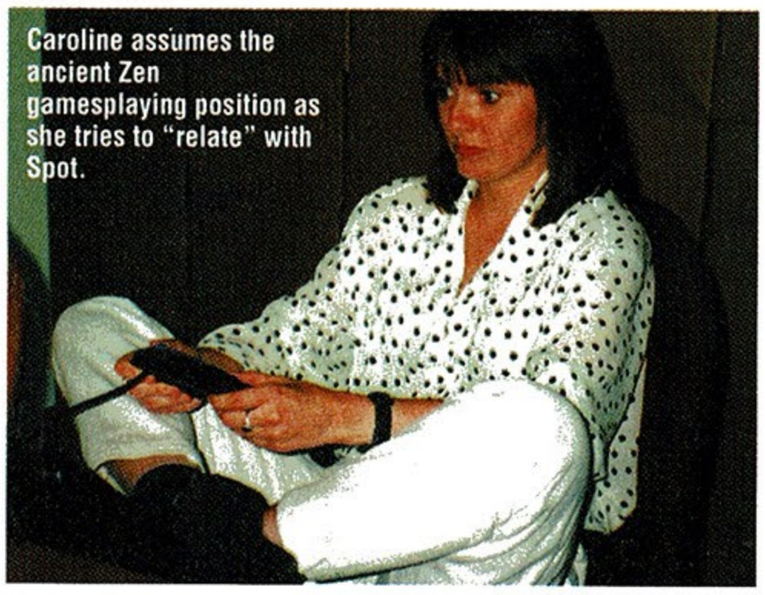
Secret choice
MUHAMMAD ALI'S HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING
We unveiled *Ali* to the relief of both players – rumours before the challenge were that it was to be *Two Tribes*. Caroline immediately squeaked: "I beat my brother at this all the time." While a smug Dave just quipped: "Man against woman. Need I say more?"

Receiving a massive eight in last issue's review, *Ali* is arguably the greatest boxing game to grace the Mega Drive. It combines two sorts of game – arcade and simulation – making it appeal to all types of players. We set up the game as a battle to the death. Only a slow rapid fire on a knockdown would keep the loser on the canvas.

COOL SPOT

Caroline's coolness

Without further ado, Caroline zoomed up the left-hand side, picking up spots faster than Michelle out of EastEnders. After returning to the ground the Virgin girl zoomed across the skies and landed, with a decent 35% cooldom under her belt. Poor old Spot was sweating with the pace, but still she pressed on, making her way quickly to the right-hand side. Quickly blowing up one crab and then another, this girl has no sympathy for the loved-starved sea creatures inhabiting the surroundings of level one.

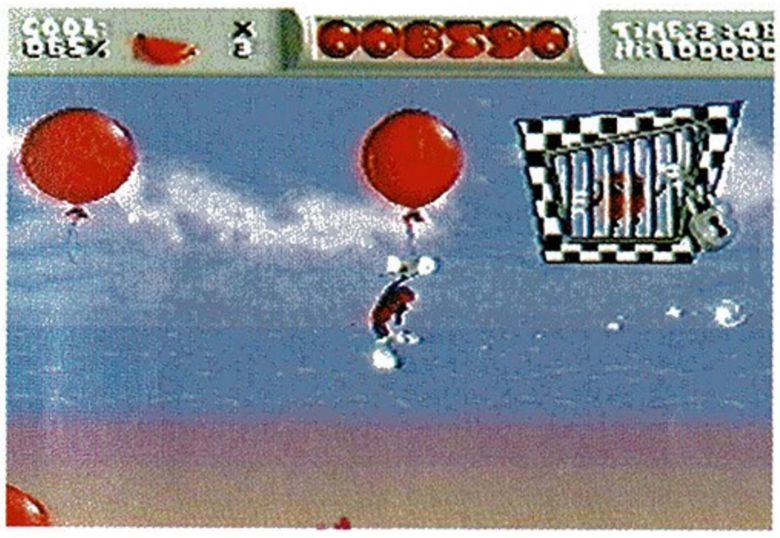


Caroline assumes the ancient Zen gamesplaying position as she tries to "relate" with Spot.

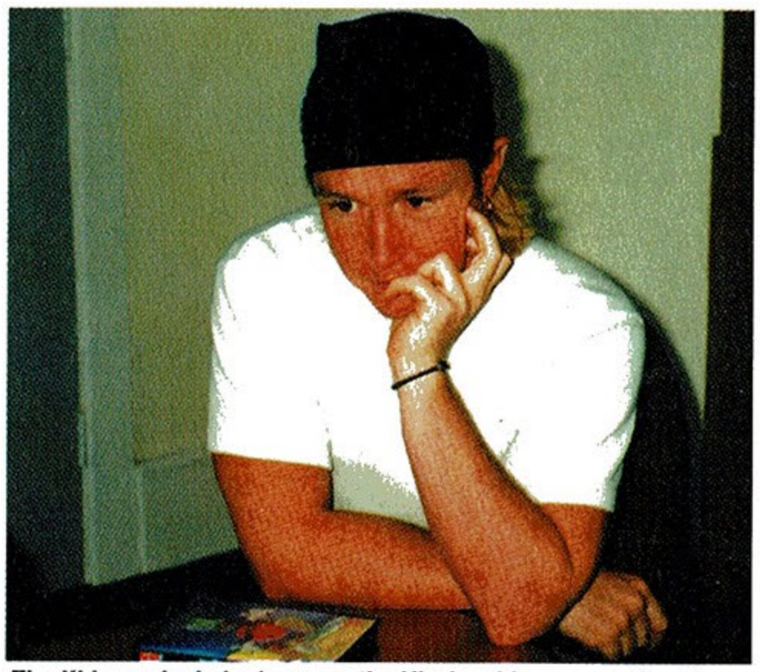
As she reached the far right of the screen, her path then turned upwards. Jumping onto a balloon, and hanging on for dear life, she proceeded to swing through the skies, back across the direction she had just come. The skies are filled with cool points, and only those who can truly master the tricky controls of *Spot* can become cool. Halfway across, disaster strikes as poor Spot doesn't quite have enough momentum to make one of the large jumps. The red-hot man of cool is not happy, but Caroline soon has things under control again, and quickly zooms back right to take the high path once more. With 53% cool already in the bag, a smile starts the creep across the young lass's face as she realises the end is nigh. Her path takes her straight up this time, and into some very lucrative cool areas. As the clock ticks to 3:47 she finally reaches the cage with 65% cool. A great time, but one that doesn't even make the Londoner break into a sweat – how lady-like. Is this girl the queen of cool? 11510 points says she is!

The Kid's coolness

Being second, the Kid, already self-proclaimed king of cool, had the advantage of seeing Caroline's route and learning from her mistakes. However, anyone who's played *Spot* as little as Dave has, needs all the help they can get. With a clear round from Caroline, the pressure was now certainly on The Kid, although, of course, the readers' choice never wavered for a second as he grabbed his trademark Arcade Power Stick in an attempt to prove to Spot that there was only room in the MEGA POWER office for one King of Cool and Mr Spot would, sadly, have to depart.



The Shell Shock level intro screen appeared, and The Kid settled in for some action. As Dave ascended the first string of spots, the it was soon evident that The Kid hadn't had the chance to get in much practise. The unfamiliar controls meant he wasn't nailing those jumps as he should, and subsequently wasted crucial seconds flailing in mid-air, desperately waving his arms in an attempt to grab onto a balloon. Just a small way across Shell Shock, The Kid fell from the skies, with just 16% cool gathered. He had missed essential air points, and would have to return to the skies as quickly as possible. As he descended a sandbank, mid-way across the dunes, The Kid met some serious resistance, receiving damage that would prove deadly later on. A quick zoom up the chair and his points bonus was boosted to 23%, but on returning to the sand he again encountered aggressive beach life and, much to Caroline's delight, bit the dust. Disaster for The Kid, and a state of affairs that would prove impossible to recover from. As the screen refreshed back to



The Kid pensively looks on as the Virgin whizz approaches the end of *Spot*. How on Earth can he get anywhere near Caroline's incredibly-lucky score? Don't worry, Dave, you can do it...

Shell Shock, The Kid quickly took to the skies in search of saving points. Caution was thrown to the wind, and without any flaws The Kid sprang over to the left then back to the right with unrivalled fluidity. If only he had shown this sort of skill on his first life. A superb, but risky, comeback had him reaching the last balloon with 59% on the counter. But Dave thought it said 58% and after picking up the last cool point, quickly turned around in search of more points. "No," the crowd shouted as one, as Caroline sniggered in the background, "you've got 60%, now hit the cage." Oh dear, those final tentative seconds were to prove most costly for The Kid as he ended up just two seconds (and 80 points) behind Caroline's now-humbled score. If only The Kid had just gone straight into the cage instead of jumping back a balloon, it could all have been so different.

But reality is what we deal with, and the sad facts are that the PR people had won the *Cool Spot* challenge – just – but our man kept cooler than Spot and assured everyone that it was only one third of the challenge, and the best was yet to come. We hoped and prayed The Kid was right, and like loyal supporters trudged off to Pizza Hut to get some nourishment for our main man.

Champion of cool: Caroline Stokes

POWER challenge

MUHAMMAD ALI'S HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING

A punishing contest lay ahead for both players. Only ten KOs in one round or failure to get up from a knockdown would finish off a boxer, so this one was guaranteed to go the distance – we thought.

Being supremely confident after her astonishingly-jammy victory on *Cool Spot*, the Virgin lass valiantly let Dave have the great champion Ali. Being extremely generous – or a bit thick, perhaps – Caroline chose the third-rated man, Mac Robinson, as her pugilistic pal. Caroline justified her choice by saying that she had used the same set-up to beat her (extremely little) brother. Dave, however, said she would get off lighter by tying her hands behind her back and giving him a brick. It made perfect sense to us, and Caroline would soon regret her unintelligent decision.

The Kid started with a flurry of punches, and just 96 seconds into the first round landed a smashing right hook on the glass jaw of Stokes. "Eat canvas!" shouted the effusive Kid, as he watched the limp-wristed Caroline pathetically tap the B button in an attempt to raise her weary Robinson from the canvas. As he arose from the comfy blue floor (to which he was to return many times after), Ali immediately delivered more punishment. BANG! a minute later, Robinson settled for a rest on the floor again. The tinkle for the end of round one couldn't come quickly enough for Stokes, but as the bell tolled she had only got off 25 punches, compared to The Kid's 79. It was no wonder Robinson had trouble raising himself for a second punishing round.

BANG! Decked with just 2:25 on the clock. SLAP! Eating canvas again 50 seconds later. SMACK! On his back with 59 seconds left in the round. CRACK! Upside down again.

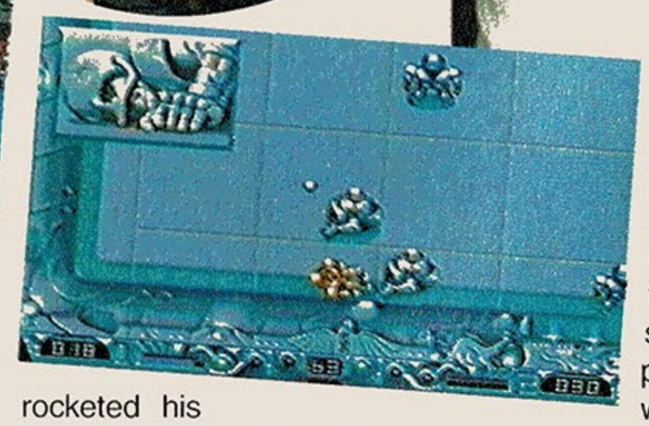
Becoming very familiar with Mr Canvas by now, Caroline was on her back more times than her dented brain could remember until mid-way through round four. As once more she tried to raise poor Mac Robinson, he had just had enough and stayed down. "Come one, you wimp," shrieked Virgin's wunder-lass at her poor fighter, but all to no avail as the ref called time 0:41 before the end of the round. With only 75 (26%) of her punches landed, compared to 338 (56%) of The Kid's, it was obvious that this girl wasn't built for rough games.

Ali world champion: The Kid

SPEEDBALL 2

After the humiliation of *Muhammad Ali*, Caroline wasn't looking forward to another brutal battle against the muscle mountain they call The Kid. But without further ado, the klaxon had sounded and they embarked on a best-of-five battle on Virgin's *Speedball 2*.

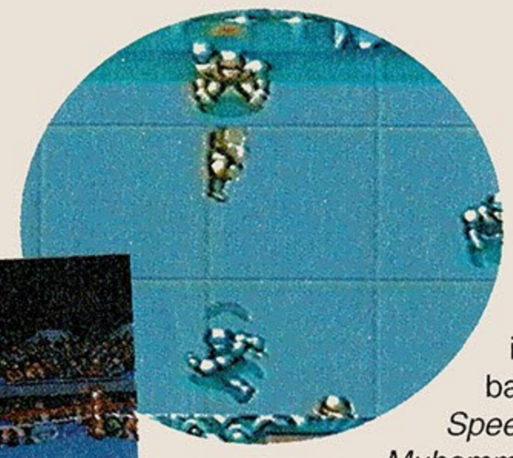
The Kid immediately displayed his prowess by slamming a quick five goals in during the opening minutes of the first game of leg one to lead 57-0 at half-time. And while Caroline quickly changed joysticks (it's *always* the joystick's fault, right?), Dave rocketed his score up to 72 before Caroline managed to accidentally hit a star. But it was all for nothing as Dave finished off the game with 184 on the board against Caroline's measly two! Sad but, unfortunately for the PR industry, true.



It would be pointless to waste space on the rest of the *Speedball* contest. After a quick flurry in the second game, Caroline only just managed to scrape into double figures for each subsequent contest, while the ruthless Kid constantly topped three figures. As the final klaxon sounded, a helpless Stokes could do nothing but dig a big hole and jump in it.

THE DEATH OF PR?

Another sad reflection on the PR world as their latest representative bites the dust. While Caroline pulled off the shock of the challenge by scraping a fortunate victory on *Cool Spot*, the lifeless girl had wasted all her energy and had nothing to offer in the bruising battles of *Speedball 2* and *Muhammad Ali*. As Dave proclaimed: "She was a Virgin when she arrived but she left far more experienced than she had bargained for!" Er, yes, Dave.



THE VICTOR

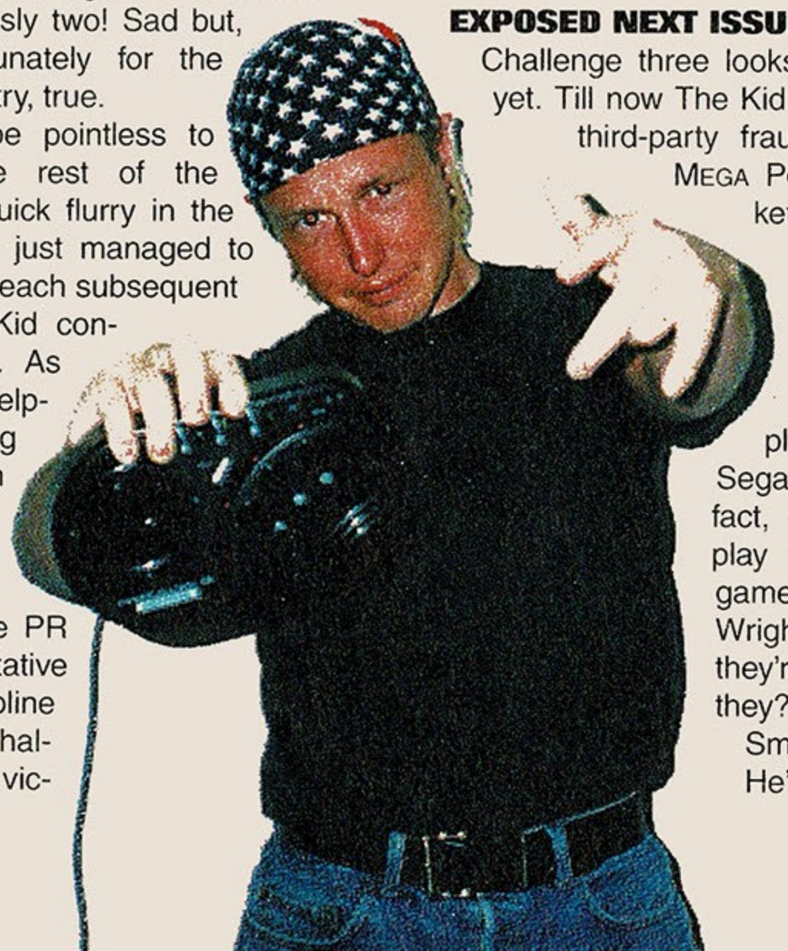
The Kid by name and The Killer by nature. This ruthless gamesplaying surgeon has taken his knife to three more games, and proved without doubt that the PR folks' gamesplaying talent is severely over-rated. After all, if the people selling the games can't play them, we weep for the future. Thankfully, a loner has come out of the shadows and is on a mission to purify the PR industry. We don't know where he comes from, we don't know when he'll leave; all we know is his name and mission. The Kid: ultimate gamesplaying animal out on the streets to expose gamesplaying fraudsters! You have been warned.

EXPOSED NEXT ISSUE!

Challenge three looks set to be the toughest yet. Till now The Kid has concentrated on the third-party fraudsters, but in the next MEGA POWER, Sega's main marketing/PR man Andrew Wright comes under scrutiny. With such a massive catalogue of titles, The Kid will be hard-pushed to have played all the games that Sega have programmed. In fact, when we asked him to play any of the Sega-brand games, a confident Andrew Wright exclaimed, "Well, they're *all* our games, aren't they?"

Smug git.

He's in for a kicking...



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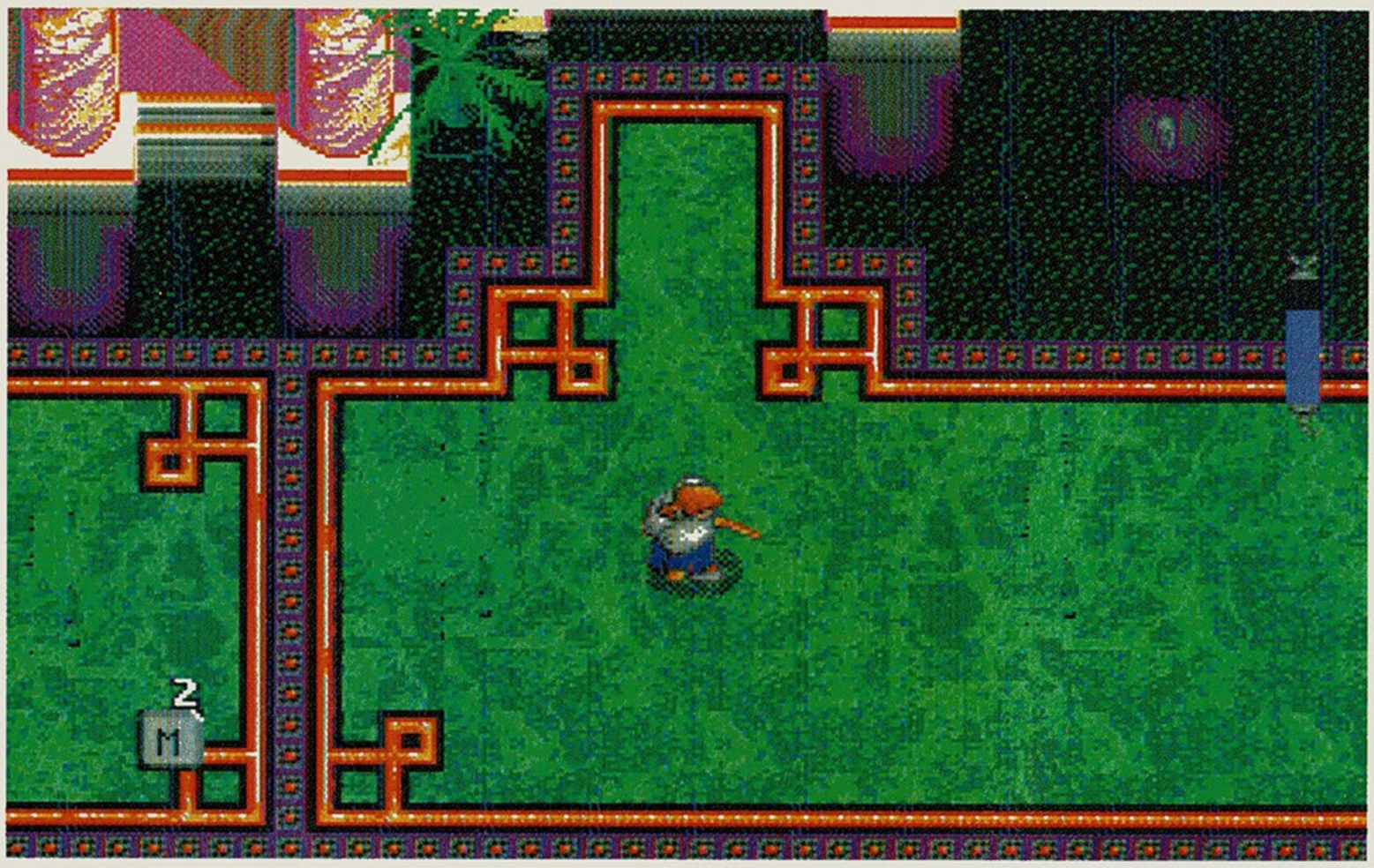
LAS VEGAS CASINO — Level one 8PXOCPA9

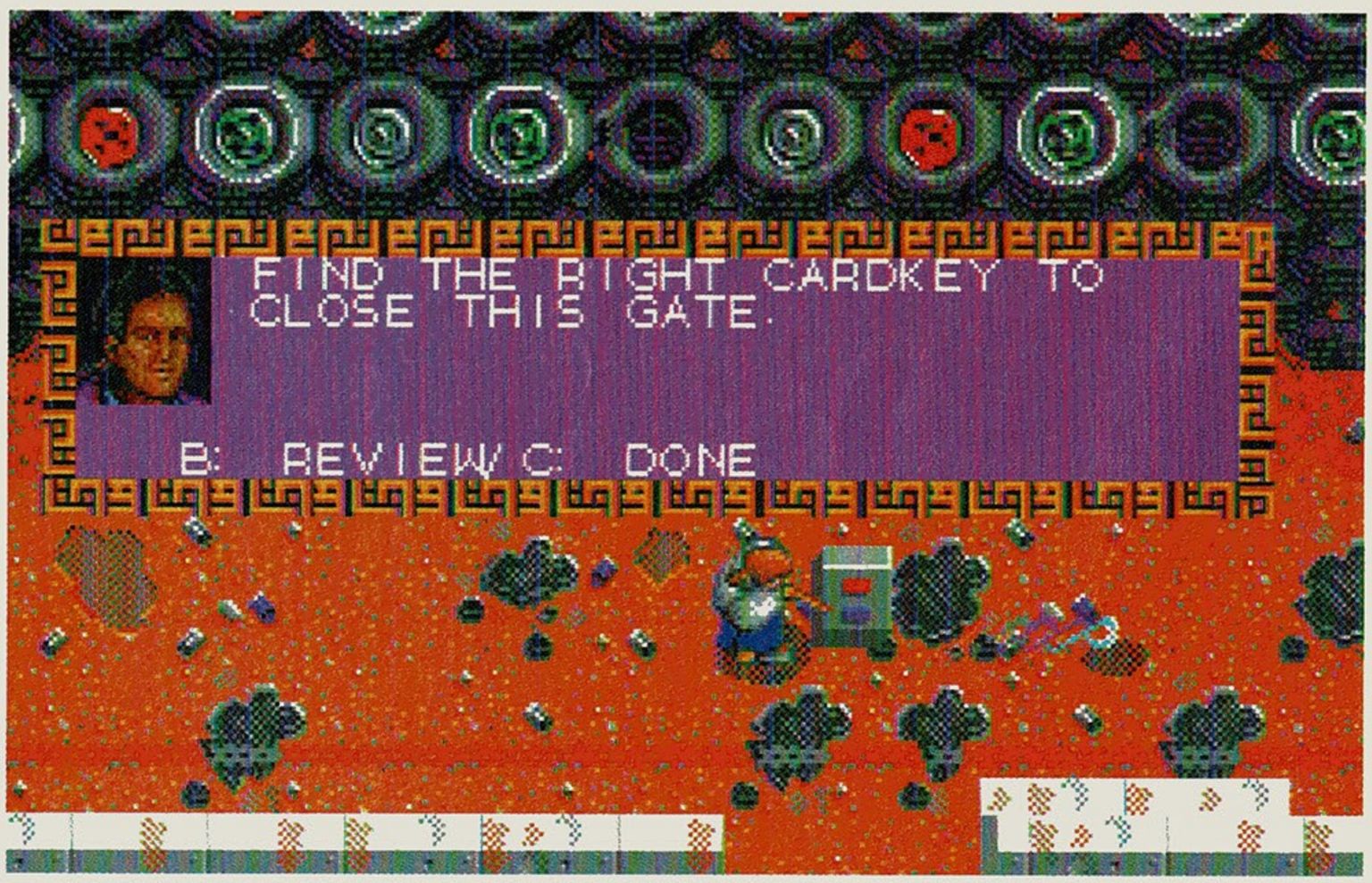


Ronaan's adventure starts here and what a battle he's got in store. This is a very short level, designed to warm you to the basic principles of the game and its controls. Try out one of each of the spells on this level, but use the basic spell to kill all the Engine Men's little guys. Save the death spells for the end or it could take ages to get passed the Engine Man.

Although this is a short level, there are plenty of obstacles that lie between you and the Engine Man. The title belies the setting, it is casino-like, but resembles the inside of a hallway in a mansion. Needless to say, the soldiers will try to block your every move. The first soldier you'll see when you appear onscreen will fire at you; you can deflect his shot with your sword to rebound it to hit him. This move can be used again and again, but you'll need really fast reflexes to make it work.

Out of your wide choice of spells the most effective to use is the mondo major. Wait until you're surrounded by at least four soldiers and release your spell. It will instantly wipe them all out. On facing the four soldiers guarding the Engine Man use the same spell. There are only five available on this first level so use them wisely. Before you know it, you'll be facing the Engine Man. Stand in the middle, where his missiles won't usually hit you, and use the death spell. This will blast away his energy. If you run out of deaths, constant use of the basic spell should clear him – eventually. Remember, deaths are very important to complete the end of most levels, so for goodness' sake, don't waste them!

THE JUNKYARD — Level two ZPFR3PEL



Abaris, your wise old tutor, occasional pops up with hints like this. As you can see, you have got the wrong key, so you must go back and collect the right one. These cardkeys close the gates and prevent more mechanical abhorations entering to attempt to defeat Ronaan. This level can't be completed until all the enemies are killed, so use Indar to find where they are.

After the first heavy battle, Ronaan finds himself in a junkyard. Before he gets dropped in, choose Fargg as your loyal companion as he's fast and you have to do lots of backtracking on this level. Fargg will also jump in and kill a monster if you use the hold spell on him.

First off you must find the cardkeys. These security passes will close the four compass point gates to stop technology escaping to your time. From there you must destroy all the enemies within the walls, so don't bother avoiding anyone as everyone has to die eventually.

The first three keys are located in the top left-hand corner, in a large junk pile on the left side, and half-way down the right-hand wall. The fourth key is underground in a secret cave. To enter it, go over to the east wall and walk down it to three-quarters of the way. Here you'll see a stack of tyres with a jutting out corner. Walk into the gap and at the end you'll find a manhole cover. Just walk into it and you'll enter the secret cave. Walk to the right, defeat all the enemies with basics, and the cardkey's at the end.

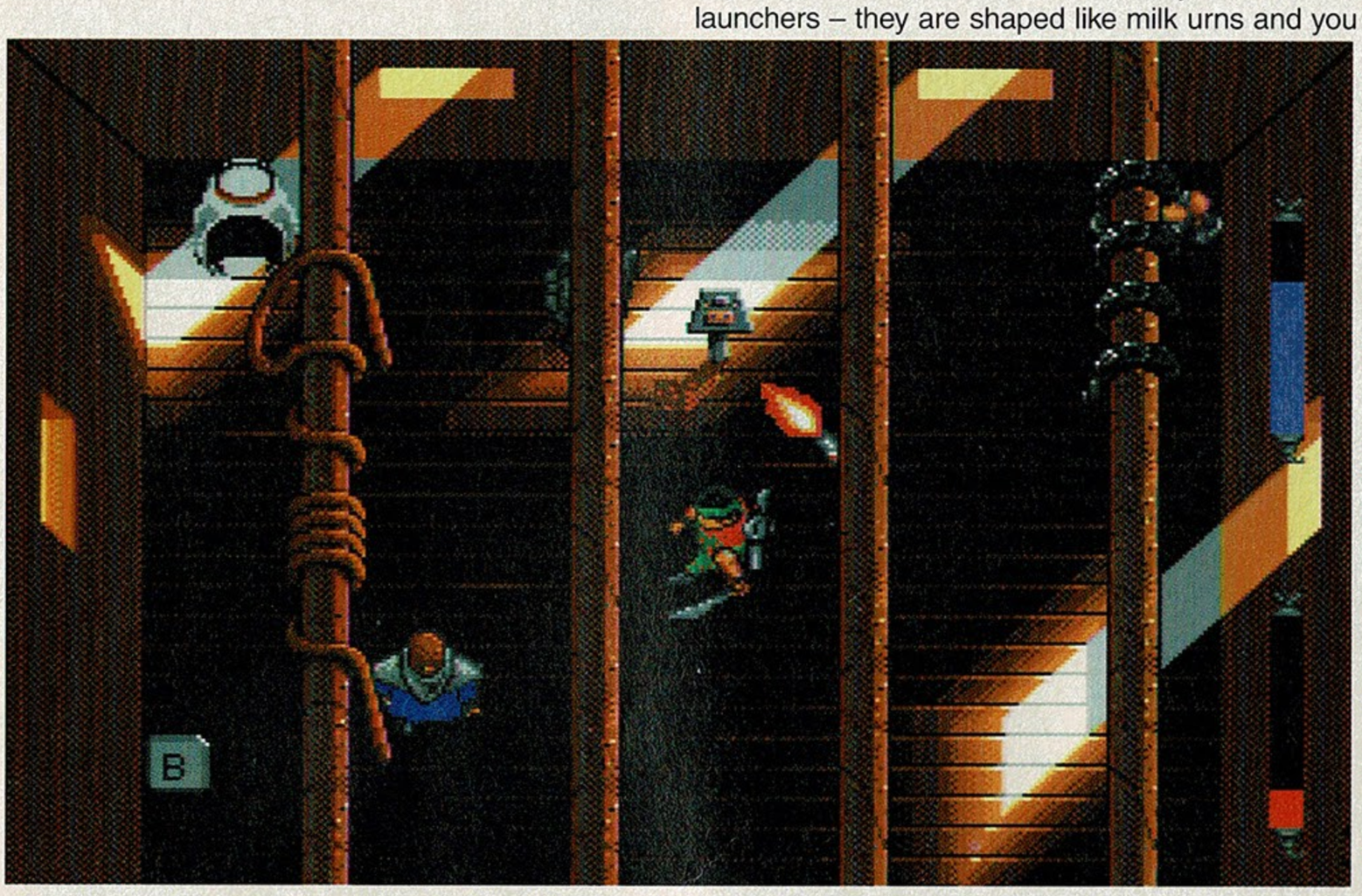
Once you've picked up all the cardkeys, they must be slotted in the consoles near to all the gates at the four compass points. Now use Indar's view to locate any remaining enemies, and kill

ASH

THE DESERT — Level three 2ATGLCF8

Choose Fargg, as he is the most efficient when it comes to disposing of the enemy. It is imperative that you keep away from the open cracks because if you fall down them, you don't come back. As you appear on this level, you'll be confronted with a large crack and moving amoebas that spurt green slime. This slime can be very detrimental to your health meter if you happen to walk into it. The main objective on this level is to destroy the missile launchers – they are shaped like milk urns and you won't be able to finish the level until you've blown up all of them. They are pretty difficult to find, so try every house you come to. The only way to blow them up is to use time bombs, so don't waste them. If you do, remember where the launchers are then go find some bombs and return. If you've really wasted them, you could die on purpose and reenter the level using the password.

Here's a nice shot of Ronaan and in his bodyguard in sweet harmony. Little do they know that within a few seconds they are going to come under a barrage of fire, unlucky boys!

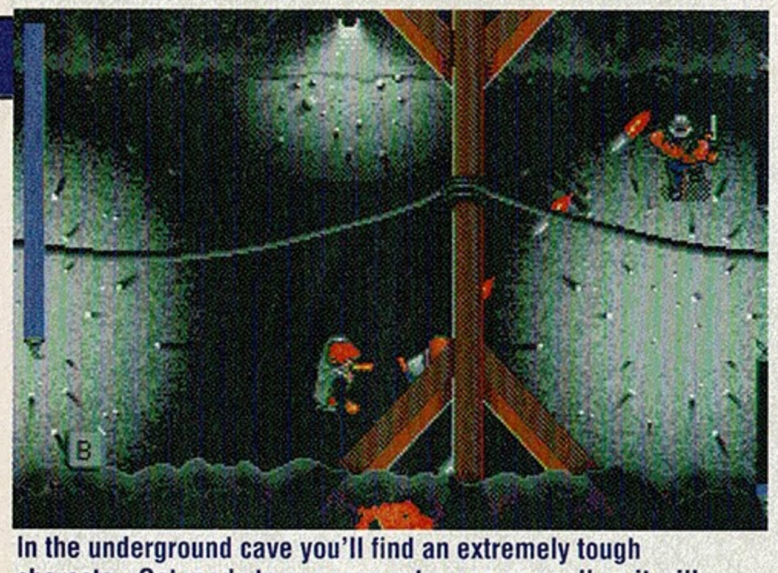


The milk churn in the top left-hand corner isn't what it appears to be. It is, in fact, a missile launcher which you have to destroy. To do so, use your time bombs and deposit one as close as you can. Stay clear of the area and it will explode. It's imperative that all of these are destroyed or you will not be able to complete the third level.

One thing you'll have to do is levitate. This must be done to reach objects and places that are separated by a gap. Farrg cannot travel with you when you levitate but don't worry he'll crop up somewhere later in the level.

There's a continue to be had on this level which will come in very handy for the later stages. It is situated to the left of the screen behind the derelict buildings. To collect the red circle you must levitate to reach it. To get to the lower bit of the level, there's a slope about halfway along the left side of the valley.

The Engine Man is situated over on the left side in a house, and can only be killed when everyone else's been zapped by your spells.



In the underground cave you'll find an extremely tough character. Get ready to use your extra energy spell as it will soon disappear if this guy hits you.

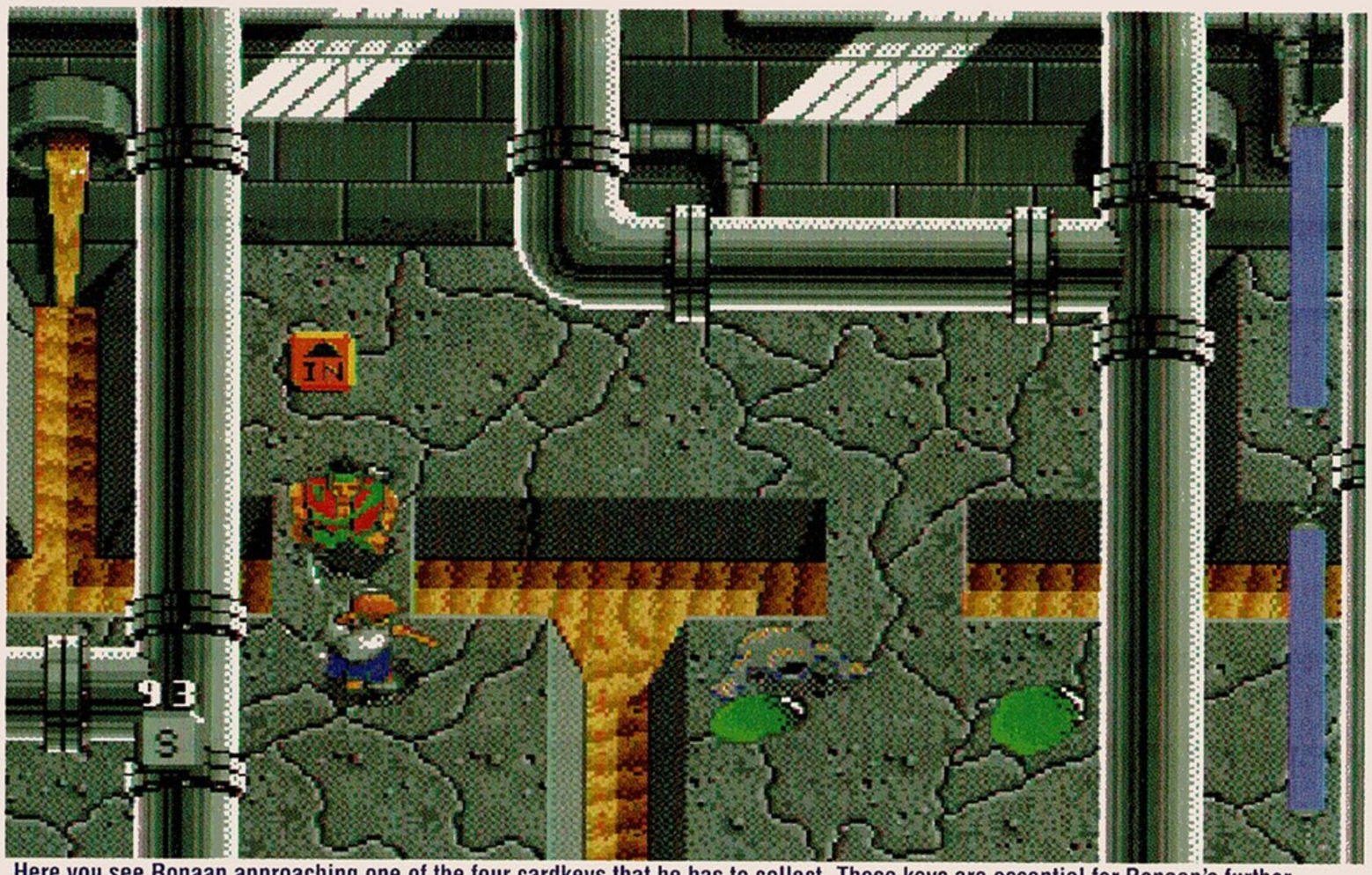
them with basics. On clearing the level, you should head back towards the centre where you'll meet the first of the junkyard's guardians.

Chuck all you can at him, but don't waste anything as you haven't finished the level yet and there are no more pick-ups available. If you die, choose Chazz as your sidekick as his spell-wielding powers are more powerful than Fargg's sword.

When this guy's history, you have to return to the secret cave for the Engine Man. This chap's a real pain, and your bodyguard will soon bite the dust. But don't worry as deaths, wides and basics will eventually rid you of his massive rocket-launching form. It takes lots of time, but it is possible.

These red cross is a bonus energy, but standing in your way is a robot rubbish bin.They don't take too much killing, a couple of shots with the basic spell should dispose of them. The house to the right contains a missile launcher, also in there are more enemies which you have to defeat before you can destroy the launcher. Use Farrg to prevent you from getting seriously hit on these sections, as there are huge amounts of enemies to contend with.

THE UNDERGROUND CITY — Level four DOMJMY2F



Here you see Ronaan approaching one of the four cardkeys that he has to collect. These keys are essential for Ronaan's further progress throughout the game. Farrg as usual is there to help and protect Ronaan, and by jove he's going to need his assistance as the slime monsters to the left can zap your energy immediately.

These walking robots are particularly nasty, they are a real swine to kill, and take loads of hits. The main problem is that in the process of killing them you'll take a bit of a mullering.

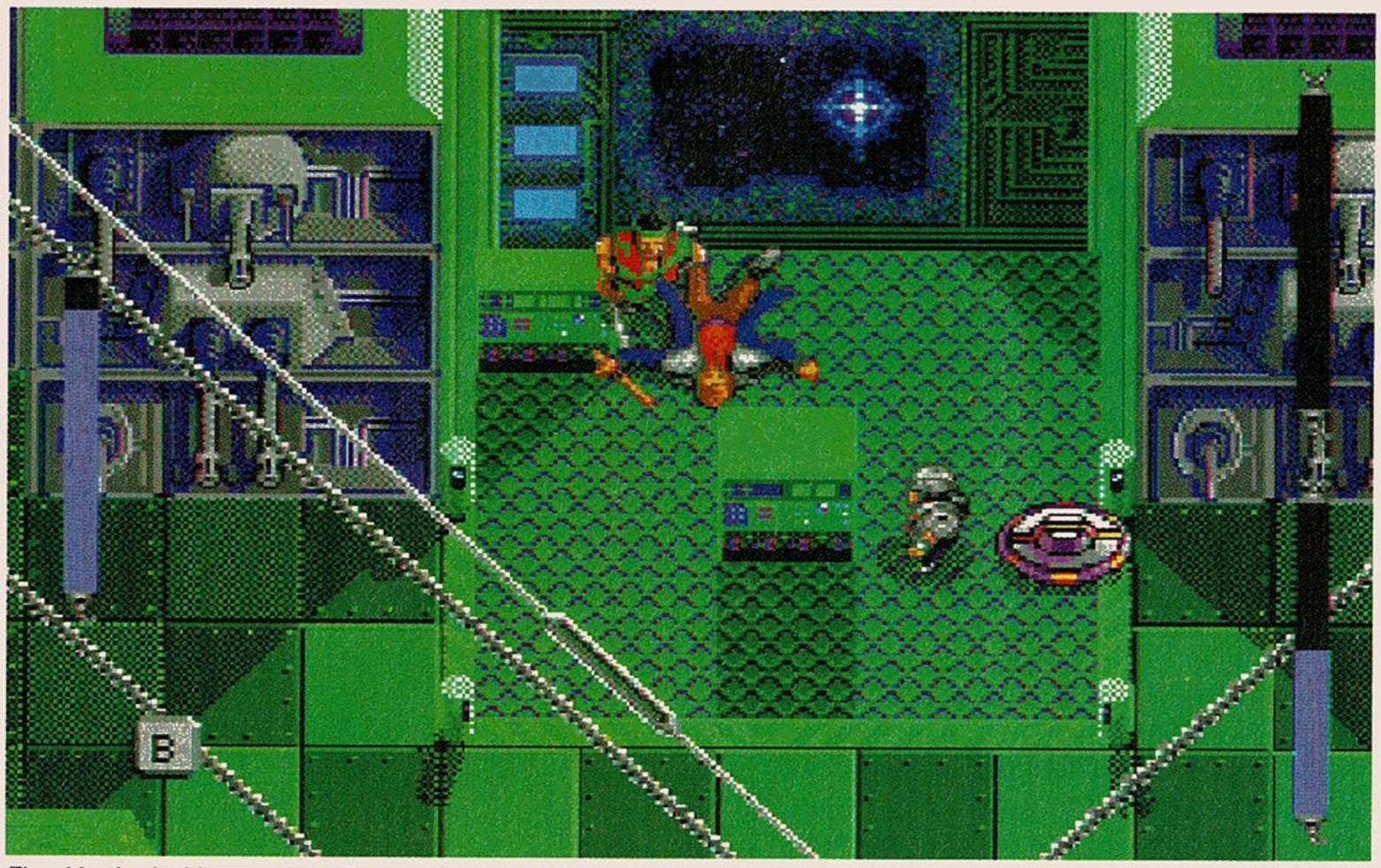
The object of this level is to locate and destroy the robot lord and claim a shard of Abaris' life staff. This is easier said than done. As you've probably gathered there are dozens of extremely hard robots on this level. Hard from the point of view that they take a good number of hits before they die; whilst you're trying to take out one of them another couple will appear and fire relentlessly at you. The only way to kill the walking robots is to drop time bombs next to them. With the humanoids that you'll encounter, use a hold and then whack them with your sword; they'll fall to the floor but they won't be dead, so use the death spell to finish them off good and proper.

Obtaining the cardkeys is no easy feat on this level. Use Indar's view to locate where the cardkeys are hidden. One of the cardkeys is hidden underground. To get there, walk down the one and only manhole south of your starting point, and retrieve the key. This key is guarded with slime so be very careful – if you fall into the slime you'll instantly die.

PORTAL CAVERN — Level five TOCLMC2B

The bad news for Ronaan on this level is that he can't become invulnerable. You must destroy the generators and confront Stiles and defeat him. The cavern holds endless enemies that are all an absolute pain to kill. The reason you must destroy the generators is because they are constantly churning out more enemies for Ronaan. Always keep your eye on the floor; avoid the flashing sections as they will kill you immediately, regardless of how much energy you have. This level does seem quite short in comparison to others within the game but is equally as tough as anything you have encountered so far. The only way to cut the field that is guarding Creator Stiles is to touch the two communication stalks. From here don't imagine that he will be a piece of cake, he won't. Use your hold spell, and then quickly change to death spell. Repeat the process until he is no longer.

The title is self-explanatory, you're stuck in a portal



The objective in this scene is for Ronaan to switch off the generators, firstly, because it stops more engine creatures from attacking Ronaan, and, secondly, because this is where you must venture to complete the end of level. Unfortunately for Ronaan, he's just been killed, but don't worry, this is all make believe and you have more than one life. The saucer-shaped object on the floor requires a mondo major so make sure you have one left in your selection of spells.

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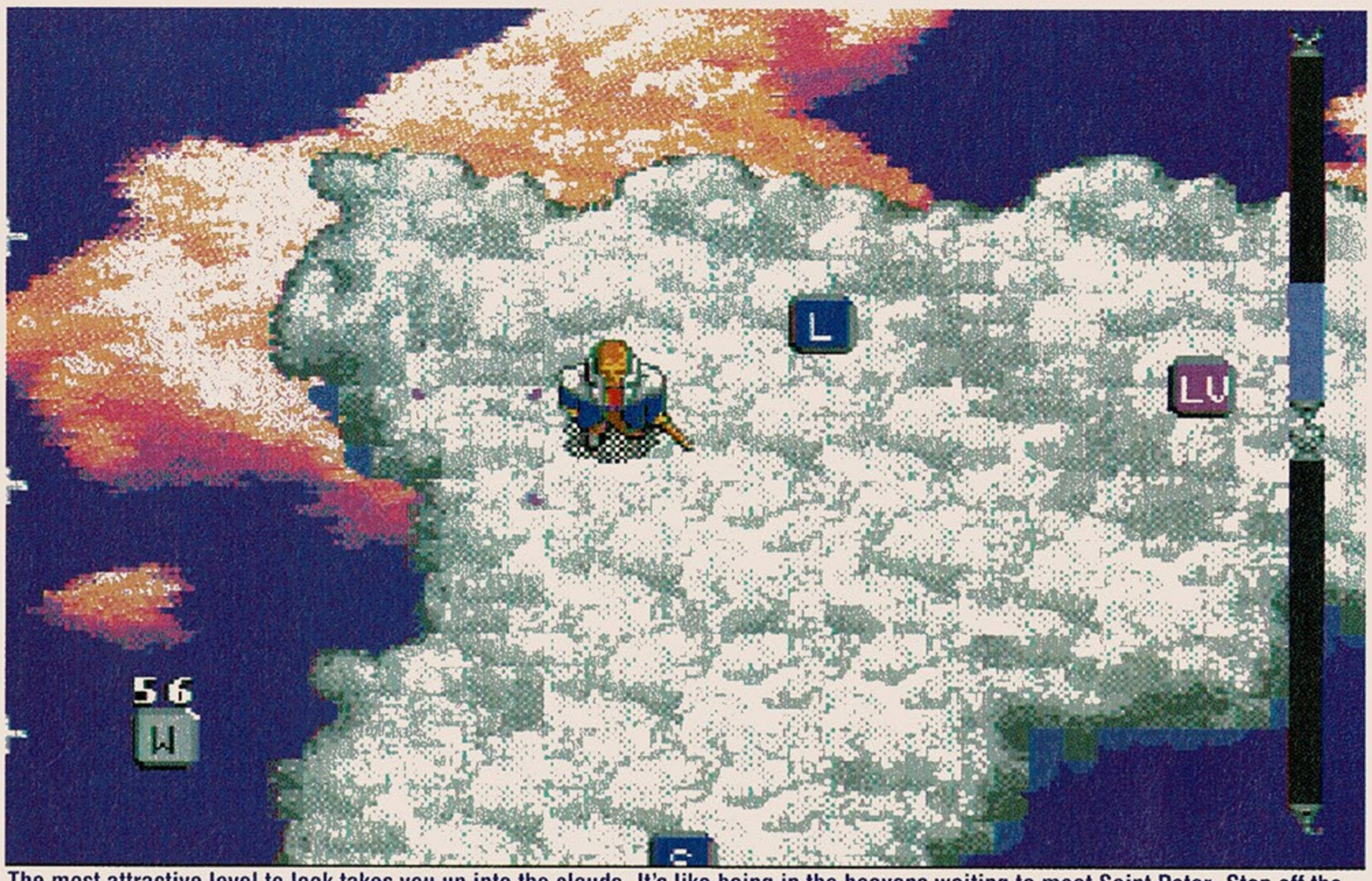
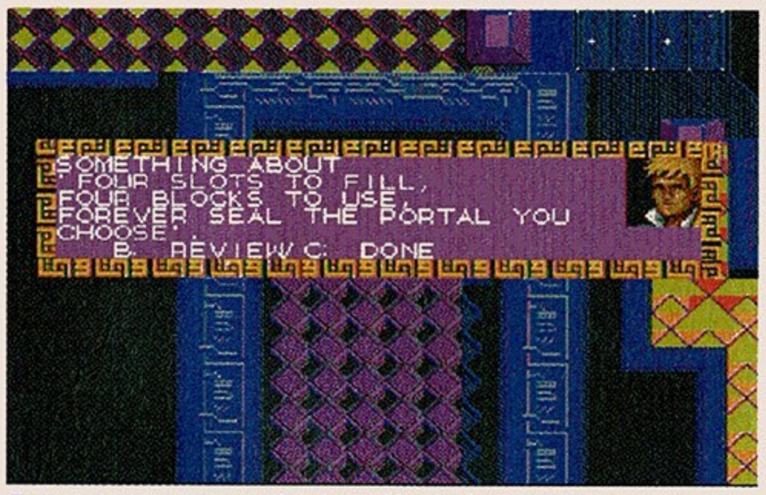


The most attractive level to look takes you up into the clouds. It's like being in the heavens waiting to meet Saint Peter. Step off the clouds, though, and you will definitely meet your maker. There are several bonus items to be had on this level and even a secret bonus. Take great care when killing your opposition as sometimes their fire can knock you off the clouds.

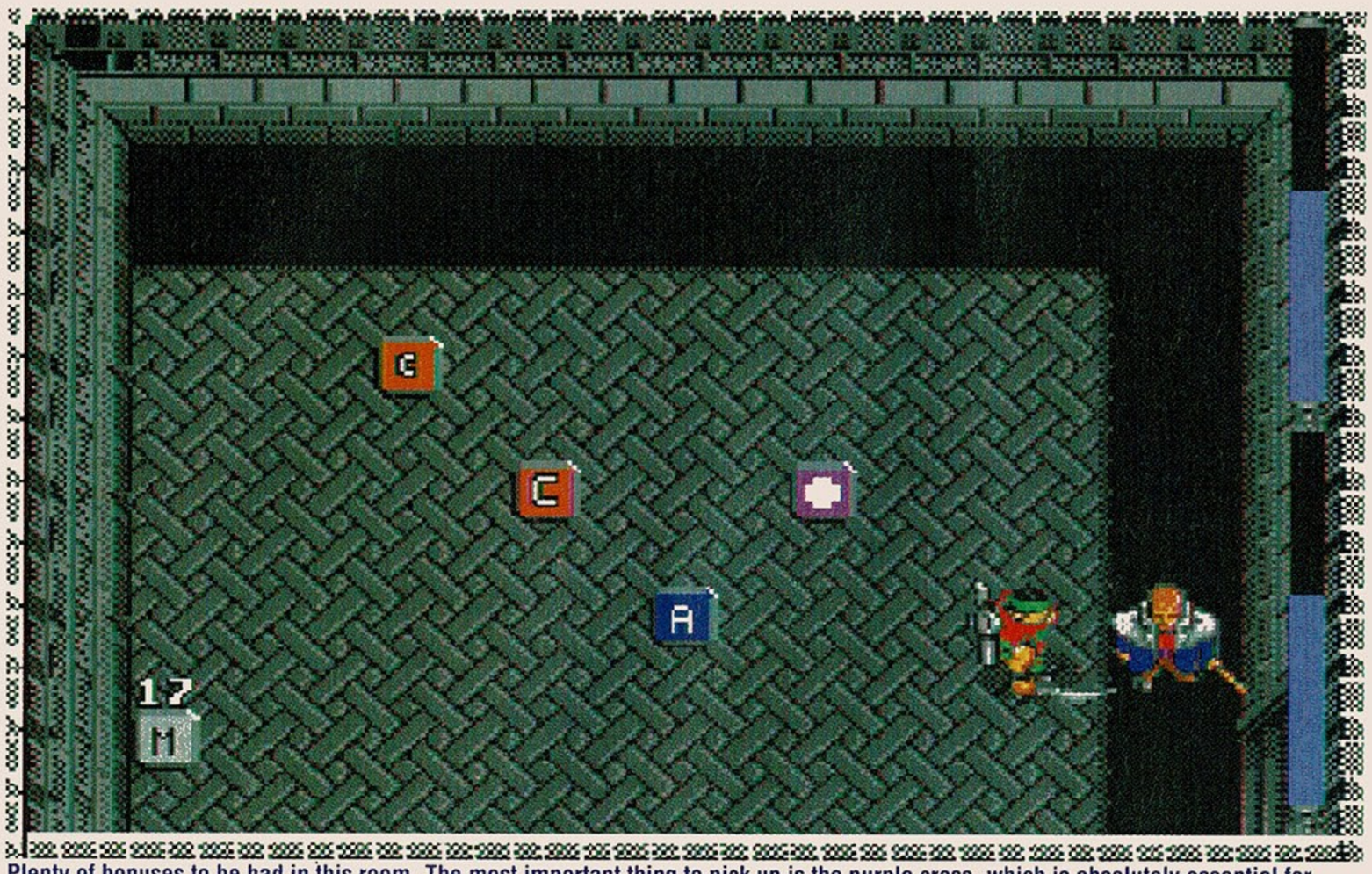


The messages you receive from Abaris throughout the game are usually beneficial, so listen carefully. Why you should bother to listen to the doddery old geezer who lost the Life Staff in the first place is beyond us, though.

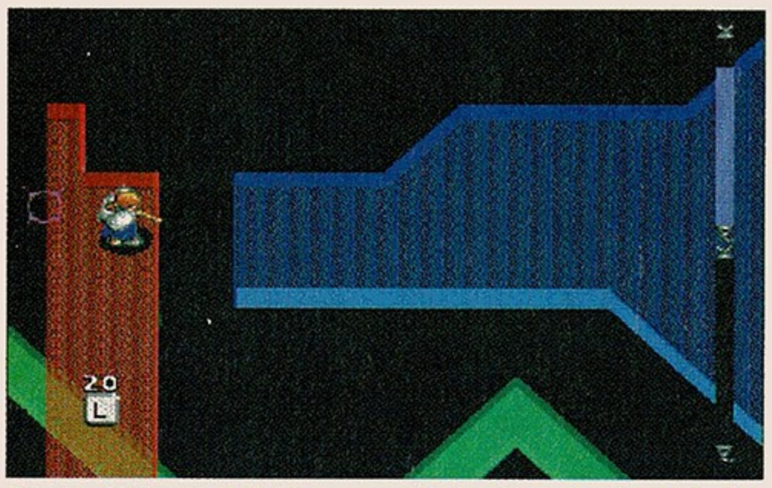
TWEEN PLACE — Level six — 6DUMT5CW

between earth and their world. Ronaan finds himself walking on the clouds in the sky. Remember not to get too close to the edge, as you'll fall and die. There aren't an extraordinary amount of bad guys on this level, but the dangers are plentiful. Saucer-shaped objects fire missiles at you and Yetis do their utmost to obstruct your passage. You'll need to levitate across the clouds so it means leaving Farrg behind, but that's too bad!

If you keep going right you'll see a radar. Walk into this and you'll find yourself on another cloud with loads of bonus items. Locate the other radar on this cloud and walk through. Your next destination will be a psychedelic world of squares. Make your way right along here defeating more bad guys and you'll eventually wind up at the final cloud. Here you'll find your exit blocked by loads of metal spiders and a further prototype of the Engine Man. Switch between invulnerability whilst attacking, as this is your only hope of survival.



Plenty of bonuses to be had in this room. The most important thing to pick up is the purple cross, which is absolutely essential for Ronaan or Farrg's energy. These bonus rooms are few and far between so try to locate them all and grab everything you can carry. This is often a good time to consult Abaris about the state of play, or, from this safe point, use Indar's view to check the surrounding danger. Just keep cool, and exploit everything the game gives you.



These are the psychedelic squares that we've warned you about. Follow the path as far as you see fit as often these paths will lead to bonuses. You will also have to use your levitation spell in order to get across large gaps. If you haven't got any, you're in quite a lot of trouble. There are, however, a few levitation spells around, so keep an eye out for them. You'll no doubt run into plenty of danger, so be prepared with your most effective spell – not necessarily basics. Try not to waste death spells, though.

TEG TEMPLE — Level seven — 7RIMTPC5

Ronaan is almost home and you can virtually see the relief on his face. The final battle takes place amongst the mazes of the Teg Temple. Your objective is to push the blocks into the holes of the temple and seal it forever. As different locations are difficult to get to, you can use the urns within the temple as teleports. Throughout your journey on this level you'll come across all the enemies from the previous levels and more. Indar replicants will fire at you, as will endless robots. In your favour, you have travelled through six levels, so you should be able to handle yourself by now. Defeating the enemies at the end will require all your skills that you have learnt within the game. As Ronaan has got a massive hang up about machinery, you better make sure he completes the task in hand, or he spends the rest of his life working for Amstrad.

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JUNGLE STRIKE

CAMPAIGN BY CAMPAIGN

Campaign one

WASHINGTON DC

The first objective is to prevent the monuments from being blown away. The enemy vehicles you'll have to destroy don't pose a massive threat, but they will use a lot of weaponry. Seeing as there are loads of ammo crates on this level, make sure you're stocked up with hydras and hellfires. This is the easiest way to deal with them. Check for trucks as these carry extra ammo, but don't appear on the map. Use your machine gun to wipe out the individual soldiers, despite the temptation to give them the missiles.

Campaign two

SUB-ATTACK

Rescue the stranded navy SEALs. Drop them off and fly to the left to get in the hovercraft. Make sure your fingers are on the hellfire button. Fly in an arc, as this is the best way to avoid coming under heavy gunfire. Be careful not to hit the hovercraft, and don't be afraid to fly away and come back from a different angle. To save fuel, don't try and hunt down all of the plutonium, you'll just come across them as you travel around. Use the huts as cover against the stationary gun on the ground. Practise with the hovercraft as it proves less effective than the comanche. Land mines are pretty ineffective; they're best placed on the sea, near the submarines for maximum destruction.

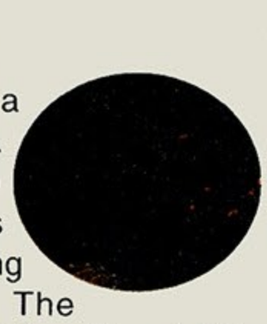
Campaign three

DESERT TRAINING

If you're running short on supplies, shoot the tent encampments for extra stuff. There's a landing zone on where you can drop off rescued civilians in order to increase your armour. There are eight sub-missions so don't waste fuel and ammo. Constantly refer to the map, planning your route. Don't bother to pick up supplies if you already have enough ammo, fuel or whatever.

Campaign four

NIGHT STRIKE



Use hydras as a source of light. Study the map carefully as this will save you being blown to pieces. The best way to avoid getting hit is usually to get the hell out of trouble, because it's pretty tough to track down the origin in the dark. Ammo and fuel are plentiful, but you'll have to hunt it down. Use hellfires to dispose of the apaches with their sparkling blades. Locating the POW camps take great care whilst flying. The best method is to drop a hellfire and fly out of the danger zone. You'll need plenty of ammo so you can see where you're going so make sure that you're well stocked up.

Campaign five

DRUG CITY

Steer well clear of the pot, as it's impossible to fly in a straight line when you're doped up. Locate the houses that contain the civilian prisoners and airlift them to the UN base, which will boost up your armour to counter the many hits you'll incur. After you've destroyed the armoured cars with the use of the motorbike, you'll need to destroy the war room, which is virtually indestructible. The only way to do this is to drop off your co-pilot who will lay down some explosives.

Campaign six

SNOW FORTRESS

The most important thing to do on this campaign is to complete your first mission. The object is to rescue wild Bill, who is a marvellous co-pilot with a brilliant aim. He'll blow away the radar sites enabling you to sneak in without being noticed. Where you see imprints in the snow, shoot as they will reveal hidden bunkers. Supplies are massively difficult to find, so restrict your flying time. Destroy the power lines to cut the power to the underground fortress. The things to watch out for are the blasted sheridans which really dent your armour.

Campaign seven

RIVER RAID

Tips on flying the stealth bomber are hard to give, just treat it like a normal plane and not the comanche. Don't make the mistake while locating the stealth of blowing up the hangar. After destroying the troop bridges, you must wipe out the drug fields. Because of the extra speed offered by the plane you can bomb along and wipe out these fields quite easily. Whilst flying merrily along, you'll come across ancient ruins. Underneath these are hidden components which are used to make nuclear weapons. The small pyramids on this level contain supplies, one area contains four extra supplies.

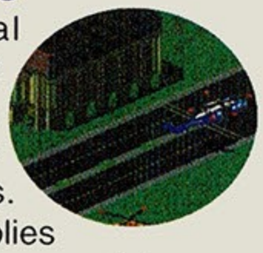
Campaign eight

THE MOUNTAINS

The bad guys appear briefly on this level, and you have to capture them. Keep your eyes peeled for the tanks as they will sneak up on you. When you fly to cut off the power to Ortega's villa, you'll be surrounded. Keep cool and wipe out the enemy on one side then hide behind the power station, and they'll carry on shooting to destroy the station for you. The underground shelter is well fortified, so blow up the protection around the bunker and then blow a hole in the side. From there fly to the bottom right-hand corner where you'll see a truck. It's filled with explosives so drive it into the bunker and kapow! If the madman's escaped, you'll find him in the top right-hand corner on the river; fly up and destroy his boat.

Campaign nine

WASHINGTON DC



For the final campaign, escort the president to safety and then wipe out 13 tanks. Unfortunately supplies are down to the bare minimum, and you'll need a lot of fuel to locate them. There's no indication as to where they are so you'll just have to fly around. Ammo is plentiful but don't get too trigger happy as getting more wastes fuel. If you locate the two armoured vehicles and blow them up, the map will then show you where the remaining tanks are. The druglord and madman are dead easy to get rid of, but by this stage you'll be getting low on fuel and ammo. To waste the trucks carrying nuclear weapons, drop a missile though the windscreen before they reach the White House. Make sure you're on target or else all that effort's been wasted.

PASSWORDS

Campaign 2 RLSMJFYBLML
Campaign 3 9V6JV4MGDBS
Campaign 4 XTMCR9WNMCJ
Campaign 5 VNPYV6PC3X4
Campaign 6 W6MDY39VSPP
Campaign 7 THCYV4MHPPM
Campaign 8 7GBTNL6MHH4
Campaign 9 N4SG3N6MHHS

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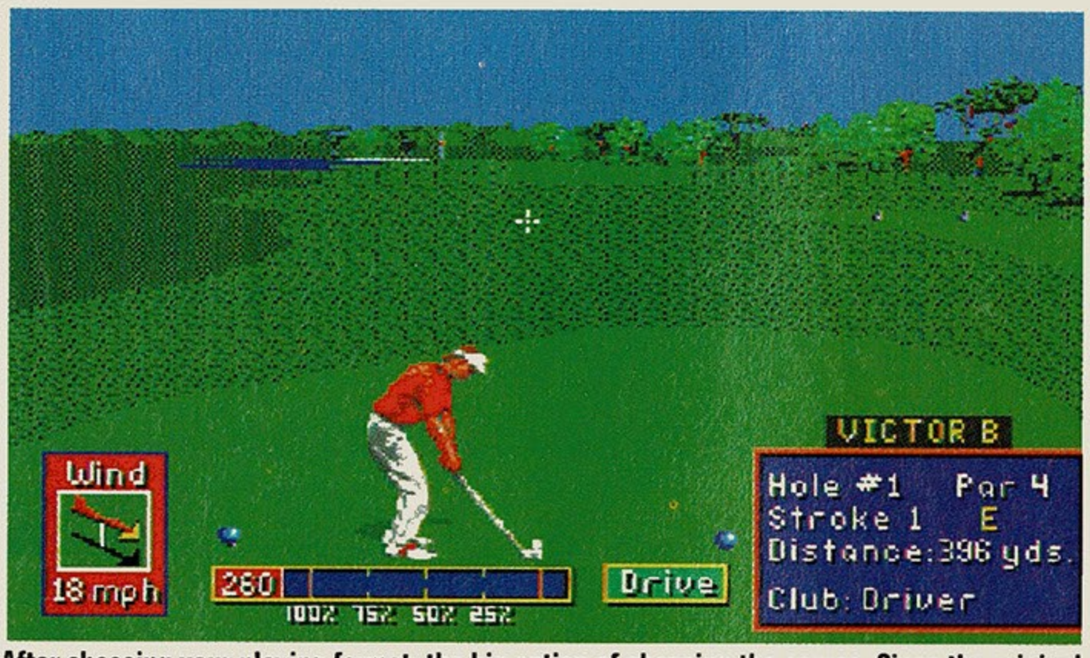
PGA TOUR GOLF II

COURSE GUIDE



After choosing your playing format, the big option of choosing the course. Since the original *PGA Tour Golf*, three more course have been added.

Southwind – This course comprises wide fairways that are easy to hit. There's also light rough, which does not provide too much danger. The main problem is the water and the hazards provided by the tricky greens. Most importantly, hit the ball straight, and concentrate on the putts.

Eagle Trace – Probably the hardest course. The problems are everywhere; hook your ball a fraction and you'll find yourself in danger. There are numerous water and sand traps waiting to catch a wayward ball.

Scottsdale – The main problem is the vast amount of sand, in the shape of numerous bunkers. This can really mess up your round, as you'll not be able to get the distance from the bunker.

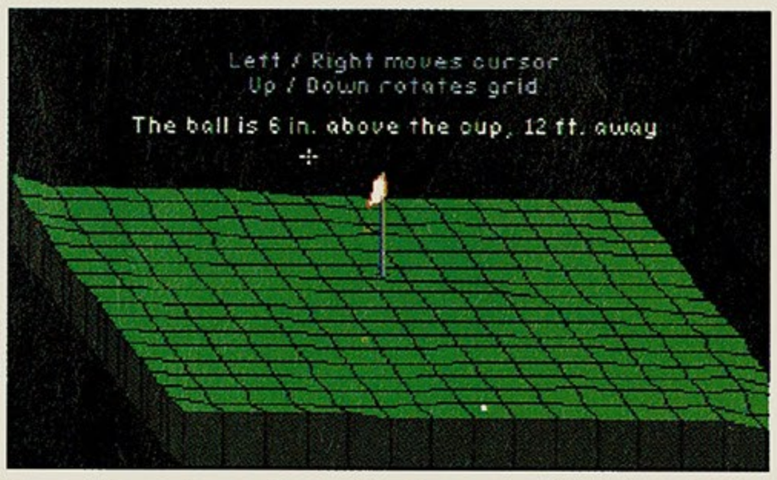
Sawgrass – This plays quite gently. If you're playing off a handicap of 1 or 2, you'll find this course can yield a fair number of birdies.

Avenel – Beautiful course that is tree lined with delectable open fairways. The biggest problem you'll face at Avenel are the greens, which are really hard to read. Lining up your putt you'll think you're on line but you're not. The key is to take your time, use the putting view, and don't go too mad.

PGA West Stadium – This one ranks alongside Eagle Trace as one hell of a course. Everything has been thrown in to make the play very difficult. Water is around every corner and there are often blind shots to be played to the pin, so play conservatively.

Sterling Shores – Lots of trees and sand. Playability is reasonable, if you can hit the ball in a straight line.

PUTT PUTT



Practise on the putting green before attempting a tournament or skins challenge. Learn to read the greens from the putting view. Here you'll be able to see the way the ground breaks, which determine which way your ball is going . Very often the putting view will say that your ball lies ten foot away nine inches below or above the cup. This means if your ball is below the cup you'll be putting up hill, so you'll have to hit the ball harder. If it's above this means you're going downhill, so obviously don't hit it too hard.

CADDY CHAT

It's advisable in club selection to choose two woods instead of three and replace the wood with an iron. Recommended selection would be a driver, three wood and the one iron. The one iron will give you that extra distance if a wood's the wrong club to use.

The main key with *PGA* is to practise. Firstly, go onto the driving range, and hit about 30 balls to warm up. You must make sure you are aware of the wind direction, club you are using and distance. The most important thing of all is to make sure you hit the base line spot on with button B. If you don't do this, you'll find that the ball will hook left if you're too early, and right if you're too late. The whole key to this game is to hit this line. A tiny fraction either way, and you'll find your shot will not end up where you want it to go.

Club selection is equally important. For example, you'll normally take a driver from the tee, but for instance never take a driver from the rough, as your ball will travel about 40 yards max.

Wind is equally essential. Check the direction before every shot and move the cursor accordingly. If the wind's blowing from right to left, move the cursor further right as the ball will drift left anyway. To check the lie of your ball at any time, press A and it will show you how your ball is.

Added options on the sequel are draw and fade. These mean that your ball will draw, take the ball more out to the right, or fade which will bring the ball back to the left. This is very useful on dog-legs, but is also quite hard to master.

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NIGHT TRAP

TREAD CAREFULLY

As CD games get more diverse, we can't any longer say, move left, jump up and collect the extra life. With *Night Trap* we advise you on the best trapping methods, and help you crack the colour codes which are essential to capture the evil men at work inside the Martins' house.

Listen carefully to Commander Simms and remember about your agent, Kelli. Kelli is part of the group of girls that are staying at the Martins' household, but she is also a member of the Sega Control Attack Team (SCAT). The bulk of your relevant information will come from Kelli so wherever you see the girls, hang around and listen to what they have to say. Normally Kelli will pass on the information when the coast is clear, but this isn't always possible. If there's nothing really going on – for example, when Megan and the girls all burst into song – leave that room for a moment and check to see what is going on in other locations of the house. You might come across perpetrators moving throughout the house – so what if you do?

The whole house is protected by an access colour code. This access code is a safety precaution installed in the house, that not only secures the house for the Martins but also, and more importantly, operates the many traps which are all over the house. The code can be changed at any time so it's your job to work out the codes and protect the girls.

You can use the traps to capture the hooded men that sneak about the house. These sneaky chaps will capture the girls, so don't let them get any further than necessary. If you allow more than 40 to enter the house without capturing any of them, Commander Simms will reappear, give you a telling off, and disconnect you from the game.

When you spot an intruder, assuming you have the correct code, the bar will shoot up. When it hits red, press button B – but you must be quick. This will activate one of the many traps within the house. If you don't have the correct colour codes you'll never get any further into the game.

For the colour codes, the access code is automatically set on blue at the start of the game. This won't change until 5:30 minutes into the game when it changes to orange. The next code change takes place in the living room, from orange to red. There is another code change in the entry way, from red then back to orange. The last code change is in the living room, which will change the code from orange back again to red. We detail all the codes changes elsewhere on this page.

At the point in the game where Megan is captured, don't press the capture button until the bar has reached the red point the second time. If you press it straight away, Megan dies and it's the end of the game. And, unless you're Johnny from Romford, you don't want that to happen.

BE THERE OR BE SACKED

Time	Place	Number of hijackers
00:05	Hallway	1
00:25	Living room	2
00:33	Bedroom	1
00:38	Bathroom	1
00:48	Bathroom	1
01:00	Living room	1
01:22	Kitchen	1
01:34	Entry way	2
03:10	Hallway 1	2
03:20	Bedroom	1
03:29	Living room	1
03:40	Hallway 1	2
03:45	Driveway	1
04:01	Hallway 2	1
04:20	Bathroom	1
04:38	Bedroom	1
04:53	Living room	1
05:02	Living room	1
05:25	Bedroom	1
05:35	Driveway	1
05:40	Entry way	Code change
05:45	Living room	1
06:08	Hallway 1	2
06:18	Hallway 2	2
06:49	Hallway 2	2
07:05	Kitchen	1
07:17	Bedroom	2
07:40	Driveway	1
07:48	Hallway 1	2

08:02	Bedroom	2
08:10	Hallway 2	2
08:25	Hallway 1	1
08:35	Bedroom	2
09:00	Living room	Code change
09:10	Living room	1
09:20	Entry way	1
10:45	Hallway 2	1
10:55	Driveway	1
11:00	Driveway	1
11:29	Hallway 1	1
12:03	Living room	1
12:37	Bathroom	1

13:10	Hallway 1	1
13:27	Entry way	Code change
13:55	Living room	2
14:13	Living room	Code change
14:40	Hallway 2	2
15:00	Entry way	2
15:15	Do not trap	0
16:25	Driveway	1
16:35	Hallway 2	2
16:43	Living room	1
16:54	Hallway 1	1
17:10	Bedroom	1
17:25	Living room	1

17:35	Hallway 2	2
17:48	Living room	1
17:54	Bathroom	1
18:00	Hallway 2	2
18:10	Driveway	1
18:15	Driveway	1
18:25	Entry way	2
18;33	Living room	1
19:00	Hallway 1	Wait for second red gauge
19:20	Living room	2
19:50	Entry way	1
20:10	Living room	2
21:14	Bedroom	2
21:30	Driveway	1
21:40	Kitchen	1
21:50	Hallway 2	2
22:05	Bedroom	2
22:23	Hallway 1	2
23:03	Hallway 2	1
23:15	Hallway 1	1
23:30	Living room	1
23:50	Driveway	1
24:00	Living room	1
24:15	Living room	1
24:25	Hallway 1	1
24:30	Bedroom	1
24:50	Bathroom	1
25:08	Hallway 2	1

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world WA

As you read this, you're witness to a clash of epic proportions. A war of attrition between two of the biggest entertainment companies in the world: Sega and Nintendo.

When Sega joined the console market in America with the Master System, it was taken as an announcement of hostilities by Nintendo. A deliberate attempt to wrestle sales away from the NES, which had taken the US by storm since its launch in 1986. Nintendo studied the situation and took a deep breath; it was all right, the MS wasn't that well received in America, despite being technically superior to the NES. The problem was software and, while the MS did well in markets like Europe, in America it died a slow, lingering death.

Luckily for Sega, they had an ace in the hole. When the Mega Drive was launched in the US under the Genesis label, it took gamesplayers, and more importantly Nintendo, completely by surprise. Guilty of resting on its laurels after the success of the 8-bit NES, Nintendo were left reeling as the world was taken over in a 16-bit frenzy, and Sega scooped the market.

Nintendo of Japan had been working on their own 16-bit machine and the Japanese launch of the new Super Famicom helped them catch up on Sega's success in the land of the rising yen, where even today the Mega Drive has a larger user base, but America would be a harder task.

When it hit retail outlets in America, the SNES was heralded as the future of consoles. Although the Central Processing Unit (CPU) runs at slower speeds than that of the Mega Drive's 7.6Mhz (slow: 3.58Mhz, very slow: 2.68Mhz and zzzz: 1.79Mhz), meaning that programmers would have to combat against sprite slowdown on busy screens, the improved colour palette (128 displayed colours on the SNES against 64 displayed from a palette of 512 on the MD), meant that the graphics had far more depth and feel to them. Tricks like Mode 7 (where the background can be scaled and rotated, albeit in a very bitmapped form) impressed players looking for something new, and allowed SNES programmers to produce some incredible effects; massive bosses, such as those seen in *Contra III* (*Super Probotector* in the UK), and driving or flying games (*Super Mario Kart* and *Super Star Wars*) were now possible.

Even though the SNES had only a handful of games to support its UK launch, the Mega Drive had no real answer. And, when *Street Fighter II* finally arrived, Sega sat back and watched Nintendo grab an enormous share of the 16-bit market in Europe and America. In Britain especially, the SNES sold thanks to *Street Fighter II*, both as a separate game and bundled with the SNES itself. Only *Sonic 2* and a heap of hype could fight off competition this stiff.

"They [Nintendo] say no Nintendo game would ever need classification. So basically they're saying they'll just develop games for four-year-olds."

The Mega-CD hits town...

The only glimmer of hope on the horizon for Sega was the Mega-CD. Greeted with unenthusiastic sales in Japan, the first batch of import machines in the UK did fairly well, given the price, although it soon became obvious that the software for Sega's new platform was very poor. Early games featuring Full Motion Video or animated intros became the norm. Some of them were very impressive, and led some developers, such as Probe Software (the people behind *Alien*^{3}, *Terminator* and *Terminator 2*) to wonder at the unit's possibilities. The long lead time – about a year to 18 months – to develop CDs meant that anything developers could come up with would take a long time to surface, although Probe are currently developing four CDs on their "as used on *Jurassic Park*" Silicon Graphics workstations, which promise to be just as stunning as Core's *Thunderhawk* is shaping up to be.

In July 1992, Nick Alexander, Sega Europe's Chief Executive Officer, was adamant that they wouldn't release the Mega-CD without adequate software support. So the November launch date was postponed until April this year, not only allowing Nintendo enough time to announce their own CD player, and then re-write the specifications for it time after time, but also for the 3DO to make a non-working prototype appearance and wow players in the US with simulations of what games *could* look like.

Then finally, the Mega-CD hit Britain and sold its entire 68,000 shipment. It smacked of desperation; a hurried launch doing just what Nick Alexander

In the red corner, we have that tired old work horse, Nintendo. And in the blue corner there's the current people's favourite, the new boy Sega. Nintendo has a proven record, relying on a good solid publicity bandwagon, but Sega have pioneered new training techniques and could have the fighter everyone's been hoping for. Veteran observer, David Graham adjudicates...

didn't want to do: release the hardware ahead of the software. But why? Surely it didn't have anything to do with the upcoming release of *Starfox/Starwing* on the SNES, did it? Or the Super FX chip? Of course it did; this business is all about oneupmanship.

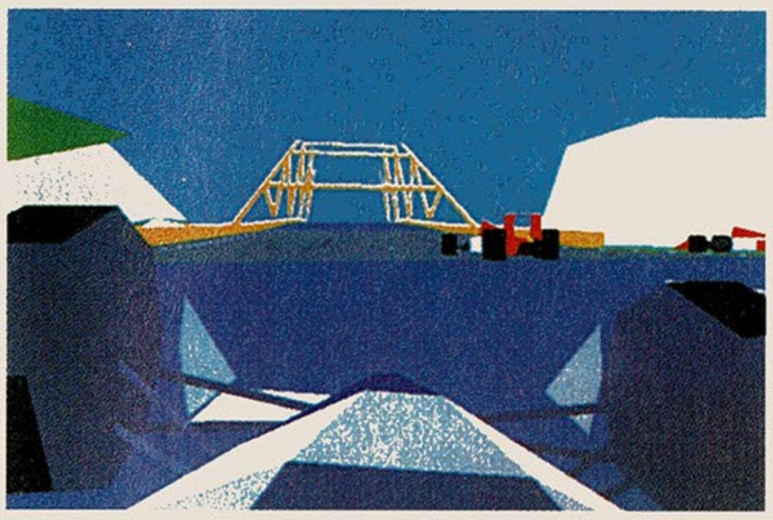
Players in the UK were desperate to see the new kit from Sega, and so they gave in to the market pressure. When it actually hit the stores, there were no games to go with it – well there were, but most retailers were still waiting for them. When it arrived, there were games like *Heavy Nova* or the disappointing *Prince of Persia* which looked embarrassingly inferior compared with the stunning Master System version, never mind the SNES one. Nintendo chuckled, players moaned and magazines complained. Had Sega shot themselves in the foot?

Out of the flames

Now, several months down the line, it's all smiles at Sega. The CD has sold out and, more importantly, recent events at Nintendo have only made Sega's position stronger. The rumours that Nintendo's much-vaunted 32-bit CD-ROM project had been indefinitely postponed, nay, cancelled, that came out at the Summer CES in Chicago have done wonders for Sega. At the same show, Sega launched their own VR system, which ought to hit the US in December and retail at around $200. Then came the first real news of Sega's Saturn project: a 32-bit RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Chip) based machine pumping out 24-bit graphics. Whether it will be CD-based or cart-based, no-one knows, but all this good news from Sega has only served to make Nintendo look even worse.

As the dust surrounding Nintendo's non-existent CD peripheral settled, it became clear just how bad things had become for the company. As it sorted out Nintendo UK and cut its distribution ties with Bandai, there was turmoil enough. But the collapse of Nintendo's deal with Sony to make a standard CD platform, while Sony manufactured their own "Playstation", has left them stranded up the creek with no sign of a paddle.

Now Nintendo employees are busy telling everyone that 16-bit technology simply couldn't support the type of 32-bit CD peripheral that they had hoped to produce. That in itself is odd, because last summer, when the press releases flowed from Nintendo's HQ like water from a leaky tap, a 16-bit console with a 32-bit CD was entirely probable, and with a retail cost of under $200! Now all Nintendo will say is that work still goes on in R&D on a CD project, but they're looking for it to be a minimum 32-bit platform, and certainly not something that will sell for more than $200. Given the costs of the technology, that's not something that we can expect to see for some time.



The next battle will take place between Nintendo's *Super Mario Kart*, which fully utilises the SNES's Mode 7 graphics rotation and scaling, and Sega's *Virtua Racing*, the first Mega Drive game to include the new DSP chip.

"The Mega-CD took gamesplayers, and more importantly Nintendo, completely by surprise."

In the meantime, Sega luxuriate in the gap left by Nintendo. With no real threat to their UK market, they can sit back and continue to release the "early" CD titles (in terms of development, which began over a year ago), and promise that things will get better by quietly murmuring words like *Silpheed* and *Thunderhawk* to players who want something more than an enhanced cartridge game.

Fishing for chips

Nintendo have their own star, the Super FX chip. The idea of giving a co-processor a name is a deliberate attempt to lure buyers, and certainly it's worked with *Starfox*, which has sold buckets of units here in the UK. But, as ever, Sega are quick to reply. Their own Digital Signal Processor chip will be used to handle some serious polygon graphics in the game no-one thought convertible: *Virtua Racing*. The fact that it's coming out on the Mega Drive and not the Mega-CD (at least a Mega-CD release hasn't been mentioned yet) confirms that Sega are out to beat their rivals in the straight 16-bit war. And, although Nintendo have an Argonaut-designed racing game called *FX Trax* pencilled in for Christmas, plus two other Super FX titles due out before the end of the year in an attempt to dump on *Sonic 3* on its release, it's doubtful that they could sufficiently spoil the success of *Virtua Racing*.

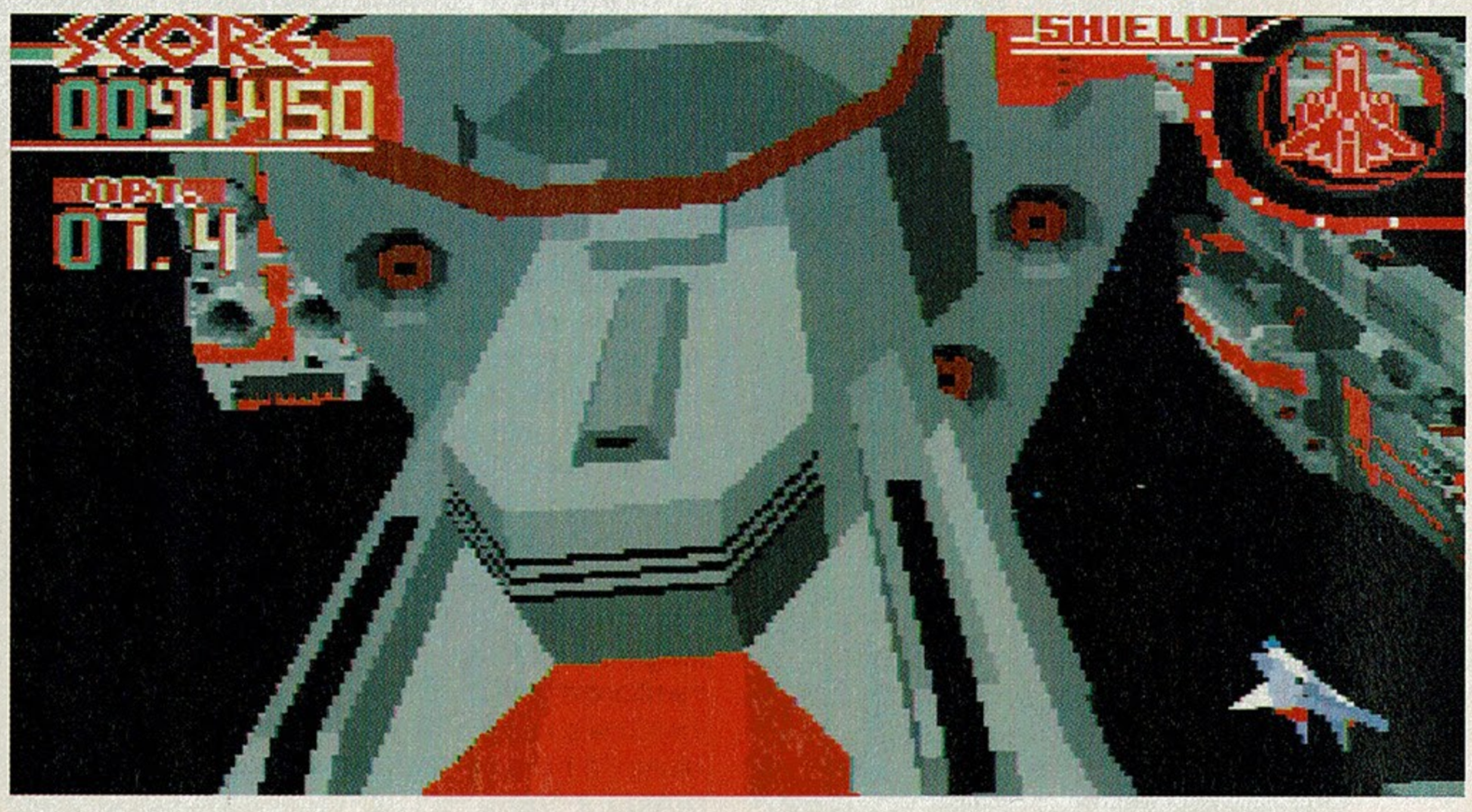
Indeed, the second generation Super FX chip (the first was only ever used in *Starfox*) seems to be Nintendo's main weapon at present, with the exception of bad-mouthing Sega's CD unit. One thing they are keeping close to their chests is just how many FX chip games we can expect next year. Well, if it was too many, people would begin to question the ability of the basic hardware, wouldn't they?!

The only real way Nintendo can now slow Sega down is by releasing a 32-bit console. And that would seem to be beyond their reach, too. Industry rumours tend to suggest that the only way Nintendo could launch a 32-bit console would be to buy up someone else's, such as Commodore and Atari. While this isn't impossible, it would hardly be cost effective at the present time. Since even Commodore can't launch a 32-bit console for under £299, it's hardly likely that Nintendo would want to do the same. No, like Sega, their aim is to sell the hardware cheaply and make their profit on the software. Right now, the only way you'll enjoy mass market CD-quality games is by picking up a Mega-CD and awaiting the next generation of software. Particularly games like *Silpheed, Thunderhawk* and the *Alien* trilogy, all of which are expected to make full use of the Mega-CD's capabilities.

Trip too far

So what of 3DO? Surely they're going to have some impact in the video games market? Well, no

world WAR 3



"Sega ruled the roost in the UK, it was really the only territory Nintendo were beaten."

Sega encouraged *Silpheed* (top) in direct response to Nintendo's Starwing (above), the first SNES game to use the Super FX, a dedicated chip inside the actual cart not the machine. Sega insist the Mega-CD already has the capabilities to produce *Starwing* bashers, and with the development of their own chip as well, Sega are confident of constantly keeping one step ahead of the Japanese giant. As the technology gets better, the prices get bigger. *Starwing* clocked in at £64.99, but *Silpheed* should be just £39.99.

"All that has been shown are simulations of what 3D0 games *could* look like, wihich is altogether a different matter."

more than Neo•Geo have had, and a Neo•Geo is around £200 cheaper, too. Founded by Trip Hawkins, the man who set up Electronic Arts, 3DO already have an impressive pedigree, with Panasonic, Time Warner and a sackful of third party developers showing interest in the new machine. Certainly, the specifications mentioned are rather impressive: a 32-bit RISC processor running at 12.5 MHz (incidentally the same speed as the CPU inside the Mega-CD), a palette of 16 million colours and the ability to shift 50 million pixels of animation per second, whilst 16-bits can only manage to shift a million per second. With the US price expected to be $700 when it launches in October, it might just be too good to be true.

Although the US video games mags have raved about 3DO, sources in the industry have not been quite so enthusiastic. As best as we can make out, so far no-one seems to have actually seen a working prototype of the machine. All that has been shown are simulations of what 3DO games could look like, which is an altogether different matter. According to people who really know, and who have seen the simulations first hand, 3DO isn't all it's cracked up to be. And, more importantly, there are very strong rumours indeed that the new wonder machine may have much of its capabilities stripped out before it's launched, simply so that it can reach US shelves this year at a price which doesn't make it even more ridiculous than it would be at $700. In short, don't start saving just yet.

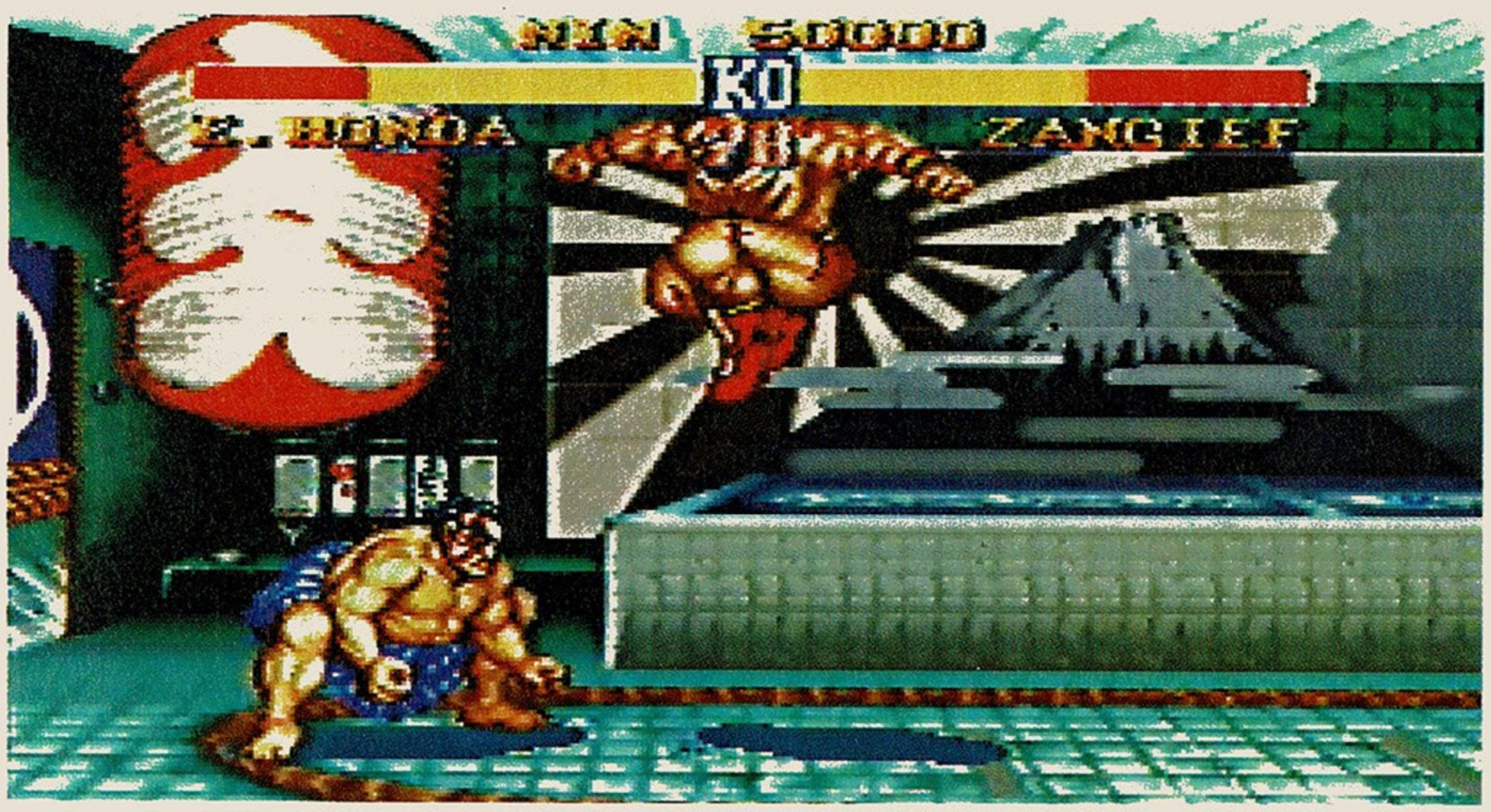
As Nick Alexander believes, 3DO is no threat to the future of 16-bit cart or CD gaming: "In the short term, not at all. This will be a high price piece of kit; I think it will probably create a lot more interest in CD technology generally, which is good, but I don't see it being a competitor at the sort of price point that it is. It would be a competitor for our 32-bit machine as and when that is in the marketplace, but for the time being, it's not really relevant." You don't get much more of a put down than that, do you? And when Nick Alexander tells you that "I think that Sega's machine as and when it appears will be probably better than anything that we've heard about so far..." you have to believe that Sega, though they like a bit of hype, just might not be pressing the bull button too hard this time round.

Of course, as Alexander says elsewhere in this issue, Saturn is a long way off, although if Nintendo did launch a 32-bit machine, Sega could respond fairly swiftly with something bigger and better. Until the cost to the end user comes down to around the £300 mark, neither company are interested.

Rude Nintendo

But how do Sega feel about their market position? Over to Nick Alexander again:

"I think we're delighted! It's a 'How rude do you want to be about Nintendo' question. I don't want to be rude about Nintendo; we're very happy with the position that we have in the market. I don't underestimate Nintendo. I think that the first few



"Sega luxuriate in the gap left by Nintendo, with no real threat to their UK market."

"Tell-tale: shredded players moaned and magazines complained. Had Sega shot themselves in the foot?"

months of this year must have been fairly horrid for them; they're in the process of trying to rebuild their organisation right the way across Europe. They had horrendous overstocks going into the New Year; I think they made the mistake of underestimating us greatly last year. We don't intend to make that mistake by underestimating them. They're a very big, very powerful company with a lot of resources, and I'm sure that they're going to come back at us very hard this season."

It would be all too easy to write Nintendo off in Europe, except that this is a massive company who generate billions and billions of dollars, and are still traditionally bigger in the US than Sega, thanks to their stranglehold on the 8-bit and hand-held markets. Of course they're working to regain their position in Europe, to think otherwise would be very foolish. However, where Nintendo slip up is in the very area where they succeed: marketing and giving the consumer just what he or she wants. Sega know just why they're leading the race over here.

"I think our marketing has been much better than theirs – by that I don't just mean our advertising. I think our understanding of what drives gamesplayers has actually been much better than theirs. For example, with *Mortal Kombat*, where the Nintendo version is going to have the bits everybody wants (the finishing moves and gore) taken out of it. And they've actually been quite rude about the classification system that we're adopting, because they say no Nintendo game would ever need classification. So basically they're saying they'll just develop games for four-year-olds.

"I don't think that's what the market wants. I think it's great for four-year-olds, but what about everyone else in the world?! And I don't understand why they're boxing themselves in that way, but I think their focus has always been that much more of a toy company and ours has always been much more that of a consumer electronics company. And indeed, most of us here at Sega Europe have backgrounds in the computer games business and are just much closer to that marketplace, and I think that has told."

And he's right. While *Mortal Kombat* on the SNES will look better graphically than its Mega Drive counterpart, the lack of gore and the all-important finishing moves will make it far less appealing to buyers. Although that won't stop it from selling like hot cakes.

All games for all ages

Sega's decision to produce games for all ages and classify them accordingly is a wise one. At the moment, the fastest growing section of the market is the 18+ and, while no-one wants to see a constant procession of *Splatterhouse*-type games with the accent on gore rather than gameplay, stripping games like *Mortal Kombat* of their intrinsic gameplay isn't the way ahead, either.

For their part, Nintendo stick to the line that they have very strong rules about just what appears in video games. Whether that will change in time is anyone's guess. Nintendo were contacted for this article, but unfortunately, their marketing department were very busy and couldn't help us. However, a source close to the company did confirm that while Sega ruled the roost in the UK, it was really the only territory where Nintendo were being beaten, and that Nintendo fully expected this to be a short term victory for Nick Alexander and co. The real test comes in the run up to Christmas. We can be sure to expect the Mega Drive and Mega-CD 2 to do big business even if, as Nick Alexander points out, the price has to be raised. Sega have never been much for price-cutting and, while Nintendo slashes quids off the SNES in an attempt to capture vital UK sales, it's more likely that Sega will choose to sell more attractive software bundles with their hardware.

Clash of the titans: *Street Fighter II* (top) versus *Mortal Kombat* (above). Both beat-em-ups will be on SNES and MD soon, but which will prove the winner [illegible]

Sitting on the fence

One man well-placed to watch the market is Stuart Dinsey, editor of CTW, the trade paper which serves the computer and console industry. He too thinks that Nintendo will bounce back later this year.

"I think it is quite clear that Sega is the market leader across the board, whilst obviously in the hand-held section, Nintendo still lead with the Game Boy.

"I think that they [Sega] went into the year winning. The changes in management at Nintendo helped them, also they went into a lot of promotion around April and May with the Pirate TV stuff and a lot of sponsorship activity. They, I would say, are still leading, but Nintendo have probably woken up a bit since June with the release of *Starwing* and more TV activity. I think we'll see Nintendo start rolling out its big guns probably around the last week in August."

Just what Nintendo's big guns are remains to be seen, but as Dinsey points out, Nintendo have been quietly busy signing cheques.

"They've been buying up a lot of software; acquiring other people's third party products, which they're going to distribute and market. And hopefully they can get a bigger impact with those titles than a third party would have done."

But even with third party software to release, Nintendo still aren't out of the woods yet.

"...Personally, I think that it does seem that they've got a bit of a problem with software. At Chicago recently, it was quite clear that on the SNES side, there was a lack of ideas from Nintendo corporately; the third parties were all doing their bit, but I think that Nintendo as a software publisher is not running out of steam, but perhaps are not quite sure where to turn next."

There can be little doubt that Sega have won this round of the war, but the real battle comes in the run up to Christmas which is fully expected to be massive. As Dinsey says, "You could argue that okay, whoever wins between month zero and month nine, it really doesn't matter. What matters is who wins the last quarter. More of the full year sales are going to come at the end of the year than last year, the way things are going."

No matter which company comes out on top, the real winners are the consumers. With so many potential sales out there, both companies are eager to lure buyers with the latest software and the best prices, and for once, we're the people who benefit. In the meantime, be prepared for some traditional fourth quarter bargains.

A–Z of tips

Tips, tips and yet more tips are what we've got here. In the A–Z of Tips we aim to give you the most useful tips we can find for every game on Mega Drive and Mega–CD.

But it doesn't stop there because if you can find a special cheat or hidden option for a game that's not listed, we want to hear from you. (All corrections to errors are also appreciated!) There are £5 software vouchers for every new cheat that we print, which means you get the money and we get the best guide around.

MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE MEGA DRIVE

AFTERBURNER 2
Level select
Hold A, B, C and press START on the title screen to enter a level select. Use the joypad to select a level, then press START to play.

AIR DIVER
Invulnerability
Go to the map screen and place the cursor over an area where there are no enemies. Hold START and press A, B, C, A, A, B, C, B, A and B. Now hold START until the game commences.

AISLE LORD
Avoid combats
Go to the config screen and choose no sound effects. Now press A, B, C, C, B, A, B, A, C, A, C, B, A. The screen flashes to confirm the cheat.

ALESTE
Level select
From the title screen, reset the Mega Drive ten times. Now enter the options screen while holding LEFT-DOWN. You should get an extra select option.

ALEX KIDD IN ENCHANTED CASTLE
Avoid sub-game
To continue the game without having to play scissors-paper-stone, go to any boss and as soon as the chit-chat is out of the way, press START to get the select screen, then START again to proceed.

CENTURION
Password
Want the world? Type in this code.
`QDUA YQ25 5555`
`55NK VKXW IPJI`

CHAKAN
Level jump
In the practice mode, jump on the platform above the air portal then go right onto the small platform. Press START and choose Alchemy. Return Chakan to the Navigation level and the first 12 levels will be completed

COOL SPOT
Level select, time, health
Pause the game and press A, B, C, B, A, C, A, B, C, B, A, C then unpause.

CURSE
Level select
Press RESET, then button A and START. You'll then enter the config screen and be able to choose your start level.

CYBERBALL
Password
Enter `CGBB B8FB BB2V` to win the game with the Chicago Killers.

DANGEROUS SEED

FANTASIA
Extra items
Start stage one, go down the stairs and shoot at the two enemies. Two brooms will appear from the right. Take these to the left and shoot the first one, then loads of items will appear.

FATAL FURY
Infinite continues
On the continue screen, hold UP and press A, B and C together. Let go and press them again and the credits will pop up each time you do it.

FASTEST ONE
Invincible tyres
Choose World Championship Mode and enter `HAPPY NEW YEAR` as your name.

FERIOS
Extra credits
When Chapter 1: Devil in Diros comes on screen, press C, A, B, A, C, A, B, A.

FIGHTING MASTERS
Same players
When selecting the first player, put your cursor over your character and press UP and A simultaneously. Player two will now also appear as this monster.

GYNOUG
Level select
Put your cursor on the Control Menu option and hold A, B, C for about ten seconds.

HARD DRIVIN'
Easier challenge
You don't have to race the Phantom Photon on the stunt track, just smash through the barrier to go around the speed track instead.

HELLFIRE
Extra continues
Choose hard from the options screen then go to the sound select and listen to any tune for 70 seconds. The game should start and replace the difficulty setting with "YEAH RIGHT". Cheat mode is now active and you have 99 continues.

HERZOG ZWEI
Password
Use `JLJOIGLAOKN` to get to the last level.

HUMANS
Passwords
Level 60 – `YNTBXYJYNWLK`
Level 70 – `VMPKNRSXXYTR`
Level 80 – `XPMNWJKFNQZC`

THE IMMORTAL
Invincibility

ALIEN3
Level select
Plug two controllers into the Mega Drive and go to the options screen. Press C, UP, RIGHT, DOWN, LEFT, A, RIGHT and DOWN on the second joypad and you will hear a power-up noise. Start the game, then pause it. On pad one press C, A and B to skip the level.

ALIEN STORM
Unlimited continues
Choose Scooter. When your life gets to zero, self-destruct and you can carry on without dying.

ALISIA DRAGOON
Level select
Hold A after the Sega logo has disappeared and then press B till Gainax is whisked away. Now hold C and press START when the stars come out. A chime will confirm the cheat. During the game, press C to skip the level and B with UP to increase your hit points.

ALTERED BEAST
Infinite continues
Press START and A on the title screen to continue from the last game played.

ARCH RIVALS
Easy scoring
Vinny's the best character. So start with the ball and pass to your team-mate, run straight up the court and press the pass-back button. Run into the corner and shoot and you'll nearly always get a three-pointer.

ARCUS ODYSSEY
Level jump
Enter EEEEEEEEEE as the password to start on level five with six reverse dolls.

ARNOLD PALMER GOLF
Super shot
Enter your name as EVE and you will be able to hit the ball great distances.

AYRTON SENNA'S SMGP 2
End password
Use SENNA or CHAMPION as your password to see the end of the game.

BACK TO THE FUTURE 3
Stage select
Pause the game, hold A and press UP, DOWN, LEFT and RIGHT to go forward a level.

BAD OMEN
99 balls
During the title menu press buttons A and C together, then START. The screen switches and you will notice that your ball stock has increased to 99.

BATMAN: REVENGE OF THE JOKER
Passwords
Stage 6 guardian: 6300
Stage 7 guardian: 7200

BATTLEMANIA
Strange scene
When the Sega logo appears, frantically press START on the second joypad and something weird will happen.

BIO HAZARD BATTLE
Level select
When the Sega logo appears, hold C and press UP, UP-RIGHT, DOWN-RIGHT, DOWN-LEFT, LEFT, UP-LEFT and UP. Then press START for a level select.

BURNING FORCE
Extra lives
When the title screen disappears, press B, A, B, A, A, C, A, A and START to get ten more lives.

Extra credits
Start the game and press LEFT, LEFT, LEFT, DOWN, RIGHT, LEFT and RIGHT on the title screen for 99 credits.

DARIUS 2
Zone select
Press C, A, C, B, C, A, B, A, B, C, A on the title screen.

DESERT STRIKE
Extra lives
To add ten lives to your Apache, enter the password BQQQAEZ and any level password.

DRAGON'S FURY
33 balls
Try entering 0956335555 as the password for 33 balls.

DEVILISH
99 balls
On the title screen, hold A, C and LEFT , then press START.

DINOLAND
Test card
When the Wolf Team logo's onscreen, press A, B, C and then START.

DJ BOY
Action replay
Watch the demo when you've completed a game – it's your game over again!

EA HOCKEY
Best shots
Slap shot from the blue line, using LEFT and RIGHT to direct the puck. Close shots are best performed slowly with lots of dribbling directly at the keeper and then pressing C.

ECCO THE DOLPHIN
Level select
Enter PLEASE on the title screen followed by any of these letters: EE, FF, GG, HH, II, KK, OO, QQ, UU, WW or ZZ.

EL VIENTO
Level select
Press START during the game, then UP, LEFT, RIGHT, DOWN and B to jump to the next stage.

ESWAT
Level select
When you complete the game properly, you can go to any level by pressing RIGHT-DOWN and A, B, and C simultaneously on the title screen. Just press START to get the select.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD'S BOXING
Green goddess
Start a new career and enter your name as The Beast. You'll turn green and have superhuman abilities.

EUROPEAN CLUB SOCCER
Password
Enter A6UAA61AA to get in the final.

F-1 CIRCUS
View ending
Choose world championship. Enter your name then press UP-LEFT, B and START.

FAERYTALE ADVENTURE
View ending
Enter your password as:
7R2KUL6RSZXSK6NHGS
DCB720663RI2HO785P

FIRE MUSTANG
Extra life
Just hold LEFT and C then press START on the title screen.

FIRE SHARK
Level select
Go to the level info screen and press A, C, UP and START to enter the round number.

FLASHBACK
Level codes
Level 7 (easy) – INCBIN
Level 7 (normal) – CLIP
Level 7 (hard) – KALIMA
Last code – CYGNUS

FORGOTTEN WORLDS
Infinite continues
Start in two-player mode, then when player one kicks the bucket, just press player two's START button rapidly to get him in the game.

GAIN GROUND
Level select
On the options screen press A, C, B, C.

GAIARES
Invincibility
Start playing then pause the game. Hold LEFT, A and C for a second then continue the game and you should be trouble-free.

GALAHAD
Infinite lives
Type in LTUS as your password then press A, B, C and START to skip levels.

GHOSTBUSTERS
Freaky stairs
You're totally immune to the ghosts while on the stairs.

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS
Invincibility
Go to the options screen four times. When you get back to the title screen press A, A, A, A, UP, UP, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT and RIGHT. Then hold B and press START to enter the fray unharmed.

GLOBAL GLADIATORS
Level skip
Pause the game and press B, C, B, A, B, B, C, B, A, B. Unpause.

GOLDEN AXE
Level select
Hold DOWN-RIGHT, B and START simultaneously on the title screen.

GOLDEN AXE II
Extra credits
Move the cursor to the Options choice on the title screen and press A, B and C simultaneously. Keep them held down until you enter the options screen, then let go of A. Move to the Exit option and press START. Choose one or two players then a normal game by pressing A. Credits should now be eight.

GRANADA
Dopey git
Once you've completed the game, wait till the music's finished and press A. Now your character will fall over – straaaange.

GRANDSLAM TENNIS
Hidden options
Enter CONFIG followed by full stops as your password.

Wait for the level name to appear then hold START. Now hold A until the game appears and finally release A to initiate invincibility.

INDIANA JONES & THE LAST CRUSADE
Level select
On the Lucasfilm logo, press A, B, C, B, C, A, C, A, B. The level option should show SHHHHHHH.

INSPECTOR X
Infinite credits
When the continue option comes up after dying, hold DOWN-RIGHT and hammer away at the C button until the credits start to climb.

JAMES POND
Open all exits
Press C, LEFT and START on the title screen. When playing, press A, B and C while rotating the joypad to open the doors on the level.

JAMES POND II: ROBOCOD
Level select
On the title screen press A, C, DOWN, LEFT and START, then before you know it, a level select will be yours.

JAMES "BUSTER" DOUGLAS
Extra continues
Wait for the Game Over message to appear then press UP and START together. You can only do this once, so only use it when you've got a chance.

JOHN MADDEN '92
Passwords
0465100 – quarter-finals
0075121 – semi-finals
0475352 – superbowl

KID CHAMELEON
Final guardian
Go to the Lake Woods 2 level. Fight your way to the end and jump onto the last prize block above the exit. Now press DOWN-RIGHT and then press the jump and special attack buttons to warp to Plethora.

KING'S BOUNTY
Password
VRP 06 8TQ
FT3 VE M6N
DG1 ZZ 7B1
MOE 8W CQR
WOA BD EHX
DCE FH Y22
VW1 JL MF6

KLAX
Special gems
On the title screen, hold LEFT-UP, A, B, C and START for a special game.

KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE
Open all doors
Enter SMAILLIW as the password.

LAKERS VS CELTICS
Password
3L2GJS – LA Lakers vs Philadelphia 76ers

LEMMINGS
Sunsoft passwords
Level 25 – BWFRB
Level 30 – CBMFL

LHX ATTACK CHOPPER
Passwords
Plain Aria – CQIERDG
Domino Mirror – CSIEIYE
Freedom Train – CSIEAZE

A-Z of tips

LOTUS CHALLENGE
Passwords
SLUGFACE – infinite turbos
MANSELL – invulnerable

M1 ABRAMS BATTLE TANK
Unlimited ammo and invincibility
Wait for the demo screen, then press B, B, C, B, C, C, C, B, C, B, B, C and START.

MARVEL LAND
Password
TRIDENT – last section

MASTER OF MONSTERS
End sequence
Press A, B, C and START on the sound test screen.

MEGA-LO-MANIA
Passwords
Level 8 – JSVADMMBQHY
Level 10 – KLFDZFMWMW

MERCS
Tougher game
Go to Commando mode and press A, B, C at the same time, then press START while holding the buttons. Enemies will now be faster and more intelligent.

MIDNIGHT RESISTANCE
Level skip
On the title screen, hold C then press START. During play, pause the game then press A to skip a level.

MOONWALKER
Level select
Hold UP-LEFT and A on the second controller, then press START on the first controller and select a one-player game.

MUHAMMAD ALI HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING
Fight Ali
Simulation – H07KKKCZ
Arcade – 007KKKCZ

THE NEW ZEALAND STORY
Increase credits
While the demo is playing, rotate the controller clockwise a few times. You should now have nine credits when you play the game.

ONSLAUGHT
Password
Enter zeros as your password to complete everything but the easy mountainous section.

OUTLANDER
Passwords
Level 3 – P69H0SK7YCKCX
Level 4 – TZZY2159Q9YK80

OUT RUN
Hyper mode
Press C ten times on the title screen, then go to the options screen and choose the new option.

RINGS OF POWER
Money top-up
Get to 32', 2" – 6', 6" and you can constantly re-enter the secret temple to get the four gold chests.

ROAD RASH
Password
B0000 04RD0 11CAF 56C7B – level five, Panda, $26,230

ROAD RASH 2
Password
0H4R 550H – level five, Diablo, $20,000

ROLO TO THE RESCUE
Secret menu
On the title screen hold UP-LEFT, A and C, then press RESET. Keep holding them for a few more seconds and press B for a cheat menu.

ROLLING THUNDER 2
Password
Level 11 – A Private Thunder Created the Powder

SAINT SWORD
Password
Level six – TAITOZ

SD VALIS
Invincibility
On the title screen press UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, A, B, UP, DOWN and START.

SHADOW OF THE BEAST
Infinite energy
Complete a game and enter your name as ZQX. Then hold A, B, C and START. During a game, your energy will still countdown, but will reset to 12 when it reaches zero.

SHINING FORCE
Forbidden box
Hold UP and START on the second joypad then turn the machine on. During the Sega screen, hold A and START on player one's pad, and A and C on the second pad. Start on any stage and you'll have the forbidden box, which raises your party's level to 19 if used.

SHINING IN THE DARKNESS
Gold spree
Obtain a magic item that will become redundant after one use then take it to the shop to be repaired. Make sure you have less money than the repair costs, then go to sleep for one night, return to the shop in the morning and you will have tons of gold coins.

SMASH TV
Level skip
On the title screen, press UP, DOWN, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT and LEFT to leap to Mutoid man.

Extra continues
If you are about to die on player one, plug in the second controller and press START to begin with a fresh character.

STRIDER
Level select
While the master laughs away to himself at the beginning of the level, hold DOWN and press A, C, B, C and A.

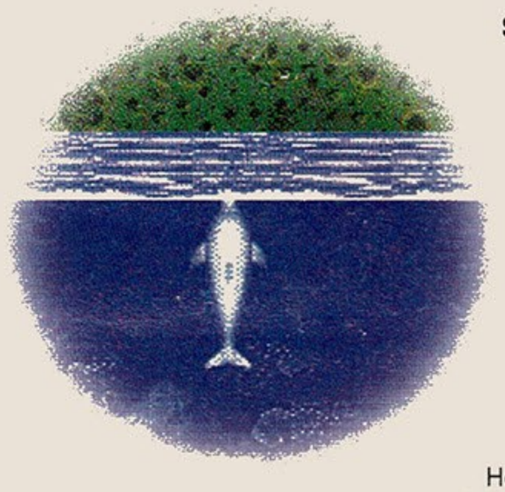
SWORD OF SODAN
Level skip
Get four potions and gulp them all at once to jump forward a level.

SUPER FANTASY ZONE
Level skip
Connect two joypads to the machine. Pause the game with the first joypad. Press B on the second pad whilst holding DOWN-LEFT and START. "Pass" should appear onscreen so press C on the first pad to jump forward a level.

SUPER HANG-ON
Password
5FF3F546F35564
FF0SLPIMFJQNKS – end sequence

SUPER LEAGUE
Password
JORQWVVRROOQSHPQGUDEAM – four-game lead

SUPER MONACO GP
Lose your head
Get in the top three in a wet race and keep A, B and C pressed as you cross the finish line. Then just wait for the prize-giving scene.



SUPER THUNDERBLADE
Level select
On the title screen, press A, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, RIGHT, LEFT, DOWN and UP. Then press UP and START together.

SWORD OF VERMILLION
Test mode
To listen to the music, press A, B, C and START together on the title screen using the second controller.

TASK FORCE HARRIER EX
Secret options
Hold A and turn on the Mega Drive. Now press UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, A, B, A, C, and B before the title stops. There are now new choices on the options screen. If you pause the game while playing, you can skip a level by pressing A, or initiate slow motion by pressing B quickly.

TAZ-MANIA

TURRICAN
Infinite everything!
On the options screen, place the cursor on exit and hold DOWN while pressing A, B, B, A, B, A, A, B, A, A, B, A, A.

TWIN COBRA
Level select
On the title screen press UP, DOWN, RIGHT, LEFT and START.

TWO CRUDE DUDES
Extra continues
On your last life, press START on player two's pad to bring in the second character.

UNIVERSAL SOLDIER
Passwords
Level six – JDRSD
Level 11 – BYTCM

VALIS 3
Sound test
On the title screen, hold UP-LEFT, A, B, C and START.

VERYTEX
Infinite lives
Pause the game while holding A, B and C. Press DOWN and START for an extra life.

WANI WANI WORLD
Infinite lives
When the Sega logo appears, reset twice and four question marks will appear instead of lives.

WARRIOR OF ROME
Password
GREBDQ3QNE – end sequence

WHERE IN THE WORLD...?
Password
MJDFPDG – Capture Carmen

WRESTLEBALL
Extra teams
On the team select screen, hold B and keep pressing DOWN for four more teams.

X-MEN
Invulnerability
When it says "Press Start button" hold A, C and DOWN on joypad one and press START. Now take out the joypad and put it in the other port when the picture of Magneto appears. Press START and choose your difficulty level, man, etc. Play the game with the joypad in the second port and you'll be invulnerable.

XENON 2
Infinite lives
Play a game good enough to get on the scoreboard, then enter OLD as your name. Do the same but get a score directly below it and enter AGE. Also try ARM and OUR.

ZOOM!
Extra options
While selecting your player, press UP, UP, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, A, B. Enter it slowly but surely. Play the game and the new options will appear on the menu.

PHANTASY STAR 2
Enhanced life
Keep pressing B and C while you're walking along to open and close the menu. A flaw in game means monsters will rarely attack you now.

PHELIOS
Extra continues
On the Chapter One screen, press C, A, B, A, C, A, B, A for six continues.

PGA TOUR GOLF II
Confuse computer
Select a Skins game versus the computer. When he's on the green, press START, then choose Green from the menu and press A. Now move the cursor in any direction, press START and the computer will take the shot you've set up.

PIT-FIGHTER
Extra continues
Get to level eight with one-player then pause the game and plug in the second controller. Unpause the game and press START on the second controller. Select your fighter and you will start with three continues. Now just beat up your former fighter and continue on through the game.

POPULOUS
Level select
Just type in the level you require, followed by BIT. For example, use the password 480BIT to get to level 480.

POWERBALL
Best team
Press B, B, C, B, B, C on the title screen.

POWERMONGER
Password
Final level – TJSDP2TJW7TI5PJ3DJ4PJLIKPHAKJEKOGQ

PREDATOR 2
Passwords
Level 4 – LOS ANGELES
Level 5 – TOTAL BODY

PRO BASEBALL SUPER LEAGUE 91
Beat everyone!
Go to the player change screen when you are fielding and press C. Answer yes to forget the match and you, strangely, win 1-0. It only works while you're fielding.

QUACKSHOT
Extra lives
Top up your lives by repeating this over and over again. Get to the Viking ship and go up the mast in the lift, collecting all the money bags. Walk right and follow the path down to the extra life. Now exit the screen, then re-enter it to see the reappearance of the extra life.

RAINBOW ISLANDS
Full complement
To get all the power-ups, on the title screen press UP, B, DOWN, LEFT, C, A, A, B and C.

RAMBO 3
Full complement
Fight to the two firing walls on level three. Destroy all bar one of the cannons, then put the yellow icon on the dagger and go to the bottom of the screen. Stab the man in camouflage and collect what he leaves behind. Repeat this to top up on everything.

THE REVENGE OF SHINOBI
Infinite shurikens
Select zero shurikens on the options screen and leave the game for 40 seconds. The zero will then turn into an infinity sign (∞).

SOL-FEACE
Stage select
On the title screen, press A, B, C, A, B, C, B, C, B, A and START. Go to the config level and put the cursor on Start. Choose the level number from here. During a game, press A, B and C simultaneously to skip a level.

SONIC
Level select
This is notoriously difficult to enter so do persevere because it does work. On the title screen (when Sonic's wagging his finger), push UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, A, C, B and C. You should hear a small noise if it's worked. Then press A and START simultaneously to enter the special options screen.

SONIC 2
Level select
Go to the sound test option and play sounds 19, 65, 09 and 17. Now press RESET and hold A and START.

SONIC 2
Super Sonic
Play 04, 01, 02, 06 on the sound test screen, then collect 50 rings in the game. Now when you press B and C you'll go Super Sonic!

SPACE HARRIER 2
Level select
While the space sequence is playing, press A, B and C together and move the joypad LEFT or RIGHT to choose a stage.

SPACE INVADERS 90
Level select
Press A, C and START together on the title screen. When the screen goes black, press B, A and C.

SPEEDBALL 2
Password
Division one: LCLI CWAF OBXE ya3q 2bst -is1 gGVC

SPIDER-MAN
Shortcut
On level one, get to the wall of boxes past the dog. Jump up to the second row and crawl to the right. You will pass through the wall and end up at the forklift.

SPLATTERHOUSE 2
Password
Level 8 – EDK VEI IAL LDL

STEEL EMPIRE
Level select
Go to the sound select option and play sounds 01, 01, 09 and 02.

STORMLORD
Reset clock
Pause the game and press B, A, A, A, C, UP, UP, UP, A, A, A.

STREET SMART
Extra lives
Reset quickly about 12 times, then choose options from the menu. Move the cursor to the sound test and press DOWN, DOWN, DOWN and A.

STREETS OF RAGE
Level select
Hold DOWN on player two's pad and press A, B and C then enter the options screen using player one's pad.

STREETS OF RAGE II
Level select
Plug in two controllers. On the intro screen hold A, B and C on both pads then press START on both. You'll hear a chime, then start the game. Pause the game, then press B and C on the first pad to bring up the level select.

TECHNOCOP
Full energy
Pause the game and press C ten times, A five times, B twice and A ten times.

TERMINATOR 2
Level skip
When you see "Press start" at the beginning, press UP, DOWN, LEFT and RIGHT in sequence three times. You'll soon know if you've done it properly! During the game press B and C together to jump to the end of the level.

TEST DRIVE 2
Secret options
Start driving and press A, B, and C together to adjust the car's parameters.

THUNDERFORCE III
Full power-ups
Pause the game then press UP ten times, DOWN, B, DOWN, B, DOWN, B. Get all the weapons by pressing B and A.

THUNDERFORCE IV
Full weapons
Start the game then press pause. Now UP, RIGHT, A, DOWN, RIGHT, A, C, LEFT, UP and B. Now press UP for full weapons, DOWN to clear them, RIGHT for a claw and LEFT to get rid of it. Press START to return to the game.

THUNDER PRO WRESTLING
Extra continues
When Game Over appears, press UP and C.

TINY TOON ADVENTURES
Open all levels
On the password screen:
NGQQ WWQW QKWQ
QWWQ WGRY

TMNT
Level select
When the Konami logo appears, press C, B, B, A, A, A, B, C. On the title screen press A, B, B, C, C, C, B, A.

TOEJAM & EARL
Secret level
On the first level, drop through the hole in the island to land on level zero. Have a bath and drink some lemonade. Jump off this level to zoom up to the highest level.

TROUBLE SHOOTER
Level select
Plug in two controllers. On the title screen, press START, RIGHT and C simultaneously on the second pad. On the new screen, press START, RIGHT and C to increase the level number.

TRUXTON
Power bomb
Set off a skull explosion then pause the game while the explosion's in mid-flow. Wait about 15 seconds then unpause and the bomb will increase in power.

BLACK HOLE ASSAULT
Secret game
Enter your name as AZY and highlight mission BHA. Enter AZY and you will start to play *Black Ball Assault*! (Try entering your name as BIGNET and press START while fighting an opponent...)

CHUCK ROCK
Password
Level five – TSFVNP

COBRA COMMAND
Level select
On the title screen, press LEFT, RIGHT, A, B and C. Now press LEFT or RIGHT to change level.

EARNEST EVANS
Level skip
Pause the game and press UP, A, DOWN, B, LEFT, A, RIGHT, B. Now unpause.

HEAVY NOVA
Hidden bonus
In versus mode, if you manage to kill a guardian without losing any energy you'll get one million points! The same technique might work with your bank manager.

HOOK
99 lives
Drop to the bottom of the first pit in the caves on level five. Walk right and swim under the rocks to the leaf and 3-up. Pick them up then kill yourself. Just repeat the technique, killing yourslef each time, to top up your lives to the maximum.

KRIS KROSS: MAKE MY VIDEO
Hidden scene
On the caller screen, press A, B, C and RIGHT.

MARKY MARK: MAKE MY VIDEO
Hidden scene
Hold A and C. Press START to go to the U-Direct mode and then A, B, C and RIGHT to see Mr Wahberg and his girls.

NOSTALGIA 1907
Skip intro
Turn on and when "SEGA" appears, press and hold button C till "Sur De Wave" appears. That boring intro will now be ancient history.

ROAD AVENGER
Level select
From the start, push UP to access the options screen. Once there, press A six times. Now just play the game as usual.

SOL-FEACE
Extra options
On the title screen, press A, B, C, A, B, C, B, C, B, A. Press START when you hear a sound effect. In Config Mode you'll now find Start and Mode. Go to Start and choose the start level with LEFT and RIGHT. Mode allows you to adjust the difficulty of the game, again with LEFT and RIGHT. If you press RIGHT a few times whilst holding A, you'll get "muteki", invincibility!

TIME GAL
Passwords
SHKXGJWF – 1991AD
XPTMCSHD – 2001AD
QWCDHRKT – 3001AD

WONDER DOG
Passwords
REEVES – Planet Weird
PIXIES – Planet Foggia
WOOPIE – Planet Kninus

POWER A-Z

Yep, here it is, the first Power A–Z. Unlike other A–Zs... well, no, actually it's pretty like other A–Zs, but of course there are the subtle differences that make MEGA POWER what it is.

First off, in the Power A–Z you'll find a listing of every single Mega Drive game we have discovered – regardless of its origin. If the game isn't officially available, we've written import in the price column. Obviously, as the months go by, we'll discover more and more information, like the Japanese producer, or perhaps info on the official release details. All games are listed under the English names, with the Japanese or American game name mentioned where necessary in the small synopsis for each game.

Finally, we've given each game a rating out of ten. These are not necessarily the same as those in the original MEGA POWER review, but generally reflect what we feel the game deserves when we are compiling the A–Z each month.

title	producer	price	comment	rating
B43		Import	Aircraft shoot-'em-up. Very dated but good, simple fun.	6
688 ATTACK SUB	Sega	£39.99	Difficult submarine simulation, hard to play but the effort is worth it.	7
ADVANCED WW2 SIMULATOR		Import	Another difficult game, unfortunately you'll need a strong command of Japanese.	7
AERO BLASTER		Import	Too short and easy shoot-'em-up, two-player is fun though.	6
AFTER BURNER II	Sega	£34.99	Very accurate reproduction of the coin-op, but too easy	5
AIR DIVER		Import	Quite similar to *After Burner II*, but has more challenging gameplay and tougher guardians.	8
ALESTE (MUSHA)		Import	Very amusing shoot-'em-up. Detailed graphics, but a tad too easy.	8
ALEX KIDD IN ENCHANTED CASTLE	Sega	£29.99	Platform adventure that is packed with levels but becomes slightly tedious.	6
ALIEN^3	Flying Edge	£39.99	Good graphics and sound on this basic shoot-'em-up, but poor playability.	7
ALIEN STORM	Sega	£34.99	Another shoot-'em-up that is far too easy; the two-player option saves it.	6
ALISIA DRAGOON	Sega	£39.95	Help this babe through eight stages of tough guardians and few lives.	8
ALTERED BEAST	Sega	£34.99	The graphics are flickery and response slow. Don't rush out to buy it.	4
AMAZING TENNIS	Absolute	Import	Novel perspective from behind the player brings neat gameplay to this sim.	8
AMBITION OF CAESAR		Import	Dedicated to fans of strategy games, graphics are excellent.	7
AMERICAN GLADIATORS	Gametek	Import	The game from the crap TV programme; six events to pound through. Monotonous.	5
ANOTHER WORLD	Virgin	£39.99	Revolutionary animation, brilliantly detailed graphics and addictive gameplay.	9
AQUATIC GAMES	Electronic Arts	£39.99	James Pond competes in a series of fun sports. Great gameplay and graphics.	8
ARCH RIVALS	Flying Edge	£34.99	Manic basketball extravaganza. Keeps you enthralled for a few hours but soon wears off.	7
ARCUS ODYSSEY		Import	RPG in the style of *Gauntlet*. A much-needed password save makes this slightly easier.	9
ARIEL: THE LITTLE MERMAID	Sega	£39.99	Become either Ariel or Triton to defeat the forces of darkness. Plenty of vicious sharks.	7
ARNOLD PALMER TOUR GOLF	Sega	£34.99	Up against all the competition, this still proves to be an enjoyable simulation.	8
ARROW FLASH	Sega	£34.99	Very poor shoot-'em-up, grim graphics and sound. All round embarrassment.	2
ART ALIVE	Sega	£29.99	Art package that encourages you to draw on the MD, but you can't save it!	3
ASSAULT-SUIT-LEYNOS		Import	You are a robot who has to bash other robots. Innovative, but not much fun.	4
ATOMIC ROBOKID		Import	Scrolling shoot-'em-up, that's total rubbish.	3
ATOMIC RUNNER	Sega	£39.99	Impressive graphics and sound FX make this a good solid platform shoot-'em-up.	7
AXIS		Import	Worth seeing for the amazing 3-D graphics. Very addictive shoot-'em-up.	7

title	producer	price	comment	rating
F-1 GRAND PRIX		Import	Great sound FX and graphics with pukka visuals.	8
F-22 INTERCEPTOR	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Arcadey sim where you have to shoot at Iraq. See Saddam cry!	8
THE FAERY TALE ADVENTURE	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Fans of RPGs will love it; very accessible and ideal for newcomers.	8
FANTASIA	Sega	£39.99	Tough with great graphics, let down badly by the gameplay which is very annoying.	5
FATAL FURY	Sega	£44.99	*Street Fighter II* clone with varied moves but pretty dull.	6
FASTEST 1		Import	Split screen two-player racing – but that's about it.	4
FATAL LABYRINTH		Import	Far too easy for the experienced adventurer; good for novices.	6
FATAL REWIND	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Conversion of The Killing Game Show. Strong platformer with superb graphics.	7
FATMAN		Import	Punch-'em-up with comical characters parading across the screen.	6
FERRARI GRAND PRIX CHALLENGE	Flying Edge	£39.99	One of the worst racing games available. The ear-splitting sound doesn't help.	3
FIGHTING MASTERS		Import	Great visuals, atrocious game. Only for beat-'em-up wimps.	2
FINAL BLOW		Import	Boxing game that again looks great, but don't be fooled.	3
FIRE MUSTANG		Import	A WW2 shoot-'em-up that doesn't work. Large graphics enhance the slow pace of the game.	5
FIRE SHARK	Sega	£34.99	Fun shoot-'em-up with everything except challenge. Good graphics and tricky opponents.	7
FLICKY	Sega	£29.99	Tiny sprites, simple backgrounds and awful gameplay make this simply appalling.	2
FORGOTTEN WORLDS	Sega	£34.99	Shoot-'em-up with long stages and varied enemies. Tough but enjoyable.	7
G-LOC	Sega	£39.99	Almost identical to the arcade version. Take to the skies and blast away.	8
GADGET TWINS	Imagitec	£39.99	Action packed and very funny platformer. Brilliant graphics and wonderful cartoon FX.	9
GAIARES	Sega	£34.99	Impressive shoot-'em-up which will keep all blast fans happy.	8
GAIN GROUND	Sega	£34.99	Two-player game where you have to jump and shoot your way through a massive landscape.	8
GALAXY FORCE II	Sega	£39.99	So bad, it's unbelievable...	1
GENERAL CHAOS	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Novel shoot-'em-up war game where you must position soldiers to blast the enemy.	8
GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING	Acclaim	£39.99	Poor attempt that does nothing whatsoever to Acclaim's reputation.	5
GHOSTBUSTERS	Sega	£34.99	All the characters have been turned into Japanese mutants with large heads.	2
GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS	Sega	£44.99	Expensive but great arcade adventure that has already become a classic.	9
GLOBAL GLADIATORS	Virgin	£39.99	Wonderful platform game where you fire custard at slime monsters and collect McDonald's arches.	9
GODS	Renegade	Import	Not released here yet, but stunning graphics with authentic and powerful backgrounds.	9

BACK TO THE FUTURE III	Imageworks	£39.99	Massive let down, don't even think of testing it.	1
BAD OMEN		Import	Break-Out clone, which is actually pretty good.	7
BART VS THE SPACE MUTANTS	Flying Edge	£39.99	Fantastic everything in this game – even tons of challenge.	9
BATMAN	Sega	£39.99	Fine conversion. It may get a tad boring, but accurate graphics hold things together.	8
BATMAN RETURNS	Sega	£39.99	A good sequel that proves very difficult. Five levels of hair-pulling frustration	7
BATMAN: REVENGE OF THE JOKER		Import	Better than all the other Sega versions, with large sprites and detailed backdrops	8
BATTLE GOLFER		Import	About the exploits of a golf ball and its travels. Sounds dodgy but it's good.	7
BATTLE SQUADRON	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Very tough shoot-'em-up, which is both challenging and looks great.	8
BEAST WARRIORS		Import	Don't be fooled by the pretty pictures, there's nothing nice about this game.	2
BIMINI RUN		Import	Outer-space shoot-'em-up that fails to impress. Funny but that's it.	5
BIO-HAZARD BATTLE	Sega	£39.99	High difficulty setting that is very colourful but lacks gameplay.	6
BILL WALSH COLLEGE FOOTBALL	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Much-needed development of the *John Madden* series for four players.	8
BIO SHIP: PALADIN		Import	Two-player shoot-'em-up with cool sound, but it's pretty easy.	5
BLOCK-OUT	Electronic Arts	£34.99	*Tetris* goes 3-D as you attempt to fit the blocks into a well. Very challenging.	7
BONANZA BROS	Sega	£34.99	Option of a two-player mode which makes it more fun but still too easy.	5
BUCK ROGERS	Electronic Arts	£49.99	Hugely challenging RPG with tons to do and difficulty set just right.	9
BUDOKHAN	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Good presentation, but it's another shallow beat-'em-up with limited moves.	5
BULLS VS LAKERS	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Re-live the 1991 NBA finals in this basketball sim. For die-hard fans only.	8
BURNING FORCE		Import	Awful beat-'em-up that isn't worth writing about.	1
CADASH		Import	Japanese arcade adventure. Fun to play with bright sprites and detailed backgrounds.	7
CALIBRE .50		Import	Vertical shoot-'em-up that is very mediocre.	3
CALIFORNIA GAMES	Sega	£39.99	Cool sports but rushed game. One for Surfers Steves only.	6
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THE AVENGERS	Sega	£34.99	Poor beat-'em-up worth playing in two-player mode only.	3
CASTLE OF ILLUSION	Sega	£39.99	A classic game. Great everything on this wonderful platform extravaganza.	9
CENTURION	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Historical strategy with excellent in-game maps. Unfortunately, the storyline is dodgy.	7
CHAKAN	Sega	£39.99	Taken from the comic book series. Creative graphics and music enhance this, but lacking in gameplay.	7
CHAMPIONSHIP PRO-AM		Import	Racing game with good view of the track. Very appealing with great graphics and soundtrack.	7
CHIKI CHIKI BOYS	Sega	£34.99	This platform adventure offers very little, but younger players will enjoy it.	5
CHUCK ROCK	Virgin	£39.99	Stone Age palaver in this arcade adventure. Very funny and challenging.	8
CLUE		Import	Basically this is Cluedo on the MD. Not bad, but we'd rather buy the board game.	7
COOL SPOT	Virgin	£39.99	Original, fun and super cool. It's also very difficult and will keep you playing for ages.	9
COLUMNS	Sega	£29.99	Brilliant puzzle game, which will keep you totally hooked.	9
CORPORATION	Virgin	£39.99	A strange creature escapes from the labs. You have to kill the mutant and infiltrate the corporation.	9
CRACKDOWN	Sega	£39.99	Shoot everything that moves. Detailed graphics and addictive gameplay.	8
CRÜE BALL	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Fast and furious pinball sim, with ten tables and Motley Crüe music.	6
CURSE		Import	The worst game ever?	0
CYBERBALL	Sega	£34.99	Futuristic American football, with metal monsters, inaccurate graphics let it down.	5
DANGEROUS SEED		Import	12 levels of shooting away alien plant life. Makes for a novel and lengthy game.	8
DARIUS II		Import	Another 12-level shoot-'em-up, you can do the levels in any order.	8
DARK CASTLE	Electronic Arts	£34.99	Soundtrack saves this tedious offering. Poor animation and graphics.	4
DARWIN 4081	Import		Yet again you shoot aliens – not exactly 2010 philosophy, is it?	8
DAVE ROBINSON'S SUPREME COURT	Sega	£39.99	Excellent sports simulation. Unfortunately the players aren't the real McCoy.	8
DEADLY MOVES		Import	Street Fighter II clone that lacks depth as each wrestler has limited moves and only one special attack.	7
DEATH DUEL	Razorsoft	Import	Repetitive shoot-'em-up that is very tough but lacks everything else.	6
DECAPATTACK	Sega	£34.99	Gory killings from a gruesome head-chucking main character. Big and very playable.	8
DESERT STRIKE	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Prequel to Jungle Strike, with great graphics and sound, but not enough levels.	8
DEVILISH		Import	Similar to *Break-Out*, but with better graphics. Addictive bash-'em-down fun.	8
DICK TRACY	Sega	£34.99	Loads of neat cartoon statics and a decent attempt at character sprites, but lacks originality.	5
DINOLAND		Import	*Devil Crash* on a diet. Simple gameplay and poor scrolling.	3
DJ BOY		Import	Quite original, a beat-'em-up on roller skates, but again it's too easy.	5
DOUBLE CLUTCH	Sega	£34.95	Viewed from above, this little race game should appeal to all ages, particularly the young.	7
DOUBLE DRAGON	Ballistic	£29.99	Arcade-style, two-player beat-'em-up. Much better than the sequel.	7
DOUBLE DRAGON II		Import	Flickery graphics, slow characters and tiresome gameplay.	2
DOUBLE DRAGON III	Flying Edge	£39.99	They should have stopped at the first one.	3
DRAGON'S FURY	Domark	£39.99	Official release of *Devil Crush*. Very addictive game that has superb graphics and sound.	8
DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS	Sega	£39.99	Superb graphics on this RPG and unlimited challenge make this a must.	8
DYNAMITE DUKE	Sega	£34.99	Loads of punks to mow down if you like that sort of thing. Far too easy.	6
EARNEST EVANS		Import	Guide your intrepid explorer through countless scenarios in this colourful adventure.	7
EA HOCKEY	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Prequel to *NHLPA Hockey*. Lots of gameplay, without all the intricacies.	9
ECCO	Sega	£39.99	If you like dolphins, you'll love this. *Hugely* original with stunning graphics and sound.	9
ELEMENTAL MASTER		Import	Shoot-'em-up where you've seen it all before. Gameplay is addictive and involving.	7
EL VIENTO		Import	Looks great and plays as well. Brilliant manga animation and statics.	8
ESWAT	Sega	£34.99	Parallax, multi-directional scrolling gives the impression of a huge game. Challenging and addictive.	8
EUROPEAN CLUB SOCCER	Virgin	£39.99	First decent soccer sim. Moves are convincing and creates a believable atmosphere.	7
EVANDER HOLYFIELD'S BOXING	Sega	£39.99	Well defined sprites and challenging gameplay make this an impressive sim.	8
EXILE		Import	A strange mixture of RPG, platform and puzzle makes *Exile* an intriguing game to play.	8
EX-MUTANTS	Sega	£34.99	Save the population from extinction in the aftermath of WW3. Let down by the gameplay.	6
F1	Domark	£44.99	Probably one of the most accurate driving sims around, but seriously flawed in its gameplay.	7
F-1 CIRCUS		Import	*F-1 Circus* is one of the best arcade driving sims yet. Plenty of courses, plenty of gameplay.	8
GOLDEN AXE	Sega	£34.99	Great arcade game for its time but now looks terribly dated.	7
GOLDEN AXE II	Sega	£39.99	Easier than the original, it contains loads of new creatures and some good story screens.	7
GRANADA X	Sega	£29.99	Control a 20-tonne tank to rescue a kidnapped girl. Very addictive.	8
GRANDSLAM TENNIS	Sega	£39.99	Plain tennis game which offers nothing new.	5
GREENDOG	Sega	£39.99	Greendog is one cool Steve-dude. Guide him through wild lands on this well-animated platformer.	8
GREY LANCER		Import	Ultra-fast scrolling shoot-'em-up with a great soundtrack and superb gameplay.	9
GYNOUG	Sega	£34.99	Nasty guardians and good gameplay make this worth looking at.	7
HARDBALL	Accolade	£34.99	Baseball sim that looks good but offers nothing.	3
HARDBALL III	Accolade	£39.99	Will keep fans happy with great gameplay and excellent graphics.	8
HARD DRIVIN'	Tengen	£39.99	Two levels limit this well-executed driving sim.	7
HEAVY NOVA		Import	Robots beat each other up, boring.	3
HEAVY UNIT		Import	Best thing on this shoot-'em-up is that you can change the shape of your ship.	6
HELLFIRE	Sega	£34.99	Weird wacky shoot-'em-up that has a loyal following.	8
HERZOG ZWEI	Sega	£34.99	Strategy and arcade combined, where you fight tanks. Odd name, eh?	6
HOME ALONE	Sega	£39.99	Spin-off from the movie: poor graphics and sound, with dodgy gameplay	4
HUMANS	Imagitec	£34.99	Puzzle game in which humans are controlled to clear levels. Good graphics and sound.	8
IMMORTAL, THE	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Tough puzzler with brilliant visuals. There are 20 different gory death sequences.	8
INDIANA JONES AND THE LAST CRUSADE	US Gold	£39.99	Platformer that follows the film well, but short and easy levels.	6
INSECTOR X		Import	Superb shoot-'em-up, where graphics, sound and gameplay are brilliant.	9
ISHIDO: THE WAY OF THE STONES	Accolade	£34.99	Boardgame based on *Shanghai*. Okay but boardgame conversions at dodgy.	6
J LEAGUE PRO STRIKER	Sega	Import	Once in a while there comes a game that knocks us for six. *J League* is one of those games.	9
JAMES BOND - THE DUEL	Domark	£39.99	Neat animation and flawless graphics are helped by spot-on FX.	8
JAMES POND	Electronic Arts	£39.99	First MD game to be programmed solely in the UK. Quite bland but very playable.	6
JAMES POND II	Electronic Arts	£39.99	The graphics are very slick, the gameplay is challenging and overall very funny.	9
JENNIFER CAPRIATI TENNIS	Sega	£34.99	Another plain tennis game, very basic all round.	4
JEWEL MASTER	Sega	£34.99	Initially impressive but far too repetitive.	6
JOE MONTANA FOOTBALL	Sega	£34.99	Not even Joe Montana can save this boring American football game.	4
JOE MONTANA II	Sega	£34.99	Real-speech commentary helps the sequel, but still needs work in game department.	6
JOE MONTANA III	Sega	£34.99	It just gets better and better, retaining all the good things from the previous games.	8
JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL	Electronic Arts	£39.99	The original game that started the trend. Intelligent play, but simple moves.	7
JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL 92	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Updated graphics and sound make this a worthy upgrade.	8
JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL 93	Electronic Arts	£39.99	More of stats update for die-hard fans, and folks who haven't got the others.	8
JORDAN VS BIRD	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Average basketball game that unfortunately lacks depth.	5
JUNCTION		Import	By mixing a *Pipe Mania*-type game with a slide puzzle the result is a very challenging foray.	8
JUNGLE STRIKE	Electronic Arts	£44.99	More of the same mindless *Desert Strike* encounters, but bigger and better than before.	9
KABUKI SOLDIER		Import	Beat-'em-up featuring sumo wrestlers – not bad.	6
KA-GE-KI		Import	Also known as Fists of Steel. Grim, grim, ultra-grim.	3
KID CHAMELEON	Sega	£39.99	The kid must venture everywhere to save his mates in a constantly changing game.	8
KING COLOSSUS	Sega	Import	Japanese adventure game. Nine levels of adventuring.	4
KING'S BOUNTY	Electronic Arts	£34.99	Rather boring RPG with huge amounts of bland landscape to cover.	6
KING SALMON		Import	Fishing sim with Japanese text. Sounds quite naff but is actually very addictive.	8
KLAX	Domark	£39.99	Excellent but infuriating puzzle with constantly changing graphics.	8
KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE	Flying Edge	£39.95	The Simpsons make an appearance, but a simple puzzle game really.	6
LANDSTALKER	Sega	Import	In Japanese but great adventure game with tremendous graphics.	8
LAKERS VS CELTICS	Electronic Arts	£34.99	Incredibly realistic, with all the players from that season. Basketball fans only.	7
LAST BATTLE	Sega	£34.99	Disappointing beat-'em-up with slow, boring gameplay.	5
THE LEGEND OF GALAHAD	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Average platform with an element of RPG.	6
LEMMINGS	Sega	£39.99	One of the finest puzzle games on cart. Extremely addictive.	9
LHX ATTACK CHOPPER	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Helicopter sim that isn't original, but will appeal to war junkies.	6
LOTUS TURBO CHALLENGE	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Very good racing game, enhanced by speed, superb graphics and split screen.	8
M1 ABRAMS BATTLE TANK	Sega	£39.99	If you like tanks then you won't be disappointed here. Lots of trundling around aimlessly.	7
MARBLE MADNESS	Electronic Arts	£34.99	Replica of the arcade classic which is still brilliant, but limited.	7
MARIO LEMIEUX HOCKEY	Sega	£39.99	Viewing the match from the side fails dismally, making it very hard to work out moves.	6
MARVEL LAND		Import	Platform adventure which will test your reactions and skill. *Marvel*ous graphics.	8
MASTER OF MONSTERS		Import	Boring strategy where only the monsters win.	1
MASTER OF WEAPON		Import	Scrolling shoot-'em-up which is very fast but over too quickly.	7
MAZIN WARS	Sega	£39.99	Cyberpunk adventure through a post-nuclear landscape. Looks good, but is monotonous.	6
MEGA-LO-MANIA	Virgin	£39.99	Brilliant gameplay and very challenging. Requires a lot of thought!	8
MEGAPANEL		Import	Tetris, but better presented. Interesting graphics and varied gameplay.	8
MEGA TRAX		Import	4x4 beach racer that doesn't live up to expectations.	4
MERCS	Sega	£39.99	Identical to the arcade, beefy sounds and graphics.	7
MICRO MACHINES	Codemasters	£39.99	Race your miniature car around the breakfast table. Stupid but brilliant.	9
MIDNIGHT MADNESS		Import	Average coin-op conversion which fails to impress.	4
MIGHT & MAGIC	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Popular RPG which grows on you the more you play it.	8
MIKE DITKA FOOTBALL	Ballistic	£34.99	Similar to *John Madden* but without the character – still good, though.	8
MONOPOLY		Import	Fair representation of the game with good animation. But why buy it instead of the boardgame?	6
MONSTER HUNTER		Import	Controlling a sword-wielding young lass may appeal, but it becomes very tedious.	4
MOONWALKER	Sega	£34.99	Save Michael's captured children (if you must). Detailed graphics, smooth animation and great sound.	8
MS PACMAN		Import	Much worse than the arcade version. Should have *packed* her bags and given up by now.	2

POWER A-Z

title	producer	price	comment	rating
MUHAMMAD ALI'S HEAVYWEIGHT BOXING	Virgin	£39.99	The best bruiser in the ring. *Ali* has many options, great visuals and gob-smacking sound.	8
NHLPA HOCKEY	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Simply one of the best sports simulations you can slam into your machine. Super fast, super real.	9
NINJA BURAI		Import	RPG that requires an understanding of Japanese.	7
OLYMPIC GOLD	US Gold	£39.99	Good simulation that is best played with two or more players.	8
ONSLAUGHT	Ballistic	Import	Medieval platform beat-'em-up that comes highly recommended.	8
OUTLANDER		Import	Drive 'n' blast game that will please anyone who fancies themselves as Mad Max .	6
OUT RUN	Sega	£39.99	Arcade conversion that is very similar and still great fun even now.	7
OUTRUN 2019	Sega	£39.99	Set in the future, on a par with *Out Run*.	8
PAC-MANIA	Domark	£34.99	The graphics are excellent which makes the whole thing a joy to play.	8
PAPERBOY	Domark	£39.99	Lots of new streets and even more hazards, but lacks two-player mode.	6
PAPERBOY 2	Domark	£39.99	Still no two-player mode, and pretty much the same but slightly bigger.	7
PGA TOUR GOLF	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Better than *Arnold Palmer* with four courses and great graphics.	8
PGA TOUR GOLF II	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Fantastic follow-up to PGA, with more courses and bigger, better challenge.	9
PHANTASY SOLDIER 3	Sega	Import	Quality platform adventure with excellent graphics and even better gameplay.	9
PHANTASY STAR II	Sega	£59.99	Mammoth RPG which is fairly easy to get into, but still very tough – and steep!	8
PHANTASY STAR III	Sega	£49.99	Ten quid cheaper than the original with improved graphics. But the sound is still very weak.	8
PHELIOS	Sega	£34.99	Very average shoot-'em-up, which you'll probably finish the day you get it.	6
PIGSKIN FOOTBRAWL		Import	Much more violent than American football which it's loosely based on. Also has two-player mode.	7
PIT-FIGHTER	Domark	£49.99	Digitized graphics and gut-wrenching sounds enhance the experience of battering someone to death.	8
POPULOUS	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Certainly isn't an action game, yet the strategy isn't complex enough.	6
POWERBALL		Import	A cross'between wrestling, martial arts and soccer. Innovative but poorly executed.	7
POWERMONGER	Electronic Arts	£39.99	A land mission has to be undertaken, unfortunately the graphics and sound let it down.	7
PREDATOR 2	Flying Edge	£34.99	Seven stages of futuristic street violence with plenty of hostage rescuing to be done.	8
PRO QUARTERBACK		Import	Ardent sports fans will enjoy it, but it is totally unoriginal.	7
QUACKSHOT	Sega	£39.99	Splendid Disney game with Donald starring in a superb platform adventure.	9
QUAD CHALLENGE		Import	Four-wheeler buggies racing around a race track. Utterly useless.	2
RAIDEN TRAD		Import	More shoot-'em-up fare from the Far East. Nothing new but quite challenging.	6
RAINBOW ISLANDS		Import	Two games in one on this brilliant platformer. Totally addictive gameplay and awesome tunes.	9
RAMBO III	Sega	£29.99	Shoot the annoying inhabitants of a forest sounds boring, doesn't it. Well, it is.	5
RANGER-X	Sega	£39.99	Amazing-looking shoot-'em-up with double the usual number of colours onscreen.	8
RASTAN SAGA 2		Import	Guide your gallant hero through a maze of dangly platforms. Poor gameplay, decent graphics.	5
RBI 3 BASEBALL		Import	Baseball sim without a difference. Screens full of stats and difficult batting motion.	6
RBI 4 BASEBALL		Import	Hitting the ball is hard enough. Once you've done this, you'll discover the outfield to be totally bland.	6
RBI BASEBALL '93	Tengen	Import	Yet another baseball sim in the RBI series. Only for real armchair sports fans.	6
REVENGE OF SHINOBI, THE	Sega	£34.99	Considered to be one of the best beat-'em-up games, and rightly so.	8
RINGSIDE ANGEL		Import	Sluggish gameplay ruins this women's wrestling game. Good inlay, though.	6
RINGS OF POWER	Electronic Arts	£49.95	Colourful, extremely large and exceedingly difficult. Brilliant nonetheless.	9
RISKY WOODS	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Varied backgrounds and atmospheric music make this fun to play.	7
ROAD BLASTERS		Import	Converted from the coin-op, but unfortunately it is dismally poor.	3
ROAD RASH	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Race a motorbike through the countryside, overtaking or clubbing other competitors. Great fun.	9
ROAD RASH II	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Virtually the same as the first but with the added bonus of two-player split screen.	9
ROLLING THUNDER 2	Sega	£39.99	Encounter hoods, panthers and 18-wheel juggernauts. How *James Bond* should have been.	8
RUNARK		Import	Save the world's wildlife in this Indy-style adventure beat-'em-up. Untapped potential.	5
SAINT SWORD		Import	You've guessed it: a man with a sword, boring graphics and crap animation.	5
SD VALIS		Import	Sad Japanese arcade adventure with very little content to keep you playing.	3
SHADOW BLASTERS		Import	A beat-'em-up which fails to impress; poor graphics and virtually non-existent gameplay.	4
SHADOW DANCER	Sega	£39.99	In this beat-'em-up a dog does the dirty work for you, which adds an amusing dimension.	8
SHADOW OF THE BEAST	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Psychedelic graphics enhance this otherwise poor platformer that becomes very monotonous.	5
SHADOW OF THE BEAST II	Electronic Arts	£39.99	This sequel combines teasing puzzles with atmospheric and mystical graphics.	7
SHINING IN THE DARKNESS	Sega	£44.99	Hugely addictive, with fantastic graphics and very challenging gameplay.	8
SHINING FORCE	Sega	£44.99	12Mbit sequel to *Darkness*, featuring more intelligence and improved gameplay.	9
SHINOBI III	Sega	£34.99	Tremendous platform adventure with loads of pick-ups and plenty of ninja magic.	8
SHOVE-IT		Import	As the title implies, you literally shove things into where they belong. How dull...	3
SIDE POCKET	Sega	£34.99	Uneventful pool simulation. The tables are dull but a few trick games and extra options liven it up.	6
SLIMEWORLD		Import	Todd has to escape the planet of slimy surroundings. Too green to make this bearable.	6
SNOW BROTHERS	Tengen	Import	Looks and plays like *Bubble Bobble*, but may be completed too quickly.	8
SUPER FANTASY ZONE	Sega	£34.99	Big guardians and small sprites. Good fun for a while.	6
SUPER HANG-ON	Sega	£34.99	Exciting motor-biking from this arcade classic.	8
SUPER HIGH IMPACT		Import	Good animation on this American football sim, but as usual sad lack of challenge.	6
SUPER HQ		Import	Arcade conversion from *Chase HQ* that doesn't live up to expectations.	4
SUPER HYDLIDE	Sega	£34.99	Very boring RPG that has nothing new to offer.	4
SUPER KICK OFF	US Gold	£39.99	Good in its day but now looks dated next to *J League*.	8
SUPER LEAGUE BASEBALL	Sega	£34.99	Offers enough options to stave off boredom. One of the decent attempts at the sport.	8
SUPER MILITARY		Import	Good war game that sets the scene for a challenging confrontation.	8
SUPER MONACO GP	Sega	£34.99	Everything else is here, just lacks a two-player mode.	8
SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX II	Sega	£49.99	Good graphics, but that's it on this rehash of the first game. A real con at £50!	4
SUPER OFF ROAD	Ballistic	£29.99	All the sights and sounds are here on this 4x4 truck racing game. Great fun, cute trucks.	8
SUPER REAL BASKETBALL	Sega	£34.99	Neat sound FX and good graphics scoring sequences which make this enjoyable to play.	8
SUPER SMASH TV	Acclaim	£29.99	Highly *acclaim*ed arcade game that is very tough. Bit flickery, though.	8
SUPER THUNDER BLADE	Sega	£34.99	A shoot-'em-up that's claim to fame is the two views – all it does is confuse gameplay.	6
SUPER VOLLEYBALL		Import	Side-view with super scrolling makes this a good, albeit odd, interpretation.	8
SUPER WRESTLEMANIA	Flying Edge	£39.99	Addictive two-player action in the ultimate WWF simulation.	8
SWORD OF SODAN	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Difficult to get into with sluggish gameplay.	3
SWORD OF VERMILION	Sega	£49.99	Massive RPG which is incredibly tough. Fantastic graphics, large landscape.	8
TAILSPIN	Sega	£39.99	Boring platformer with an additional shoot-'em-up section. Bad Disney licence – shock!	6
TASK FORCE HARRIER EX		Import	Poor American offering that has dodgy graphics and gameplay.	5
TAZ MANIA	Sega	£39.95	Ambient backdrops and a charismatic main sprite give this game that something special.	9
TEAM USA BASKETBALL	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Dodgy sound FX and animation let down the graphics.	6
TECHNOCOP		Import	Racing sim combined with platform investigation scenes. Naff conversion of a naff original.	2
TECHNOCLASH	Electronic Arts	£44.99	Splendid adventure based around good old-fashioned RPG principles.	8
TECMO WORLD CUP '93	Sega	£34.99	Best played on the two- player mode for the most fun. Limiting moves.	7
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES	Konami	£39.99	Great beat-'em-up, with bright backdrops and colourful turtles.	8
TEL TEL BASEBALL		Import	Terry Venables baseball tie-in – er, no sorry, funny Jap baseball game. Whoops, sorry, Tel.	6
TERMINATOR, THE	Virgin	£39.99	Packed with stills from the movie linking the four stages. Great blasting but too short.	8
TERMINATOR 2: THE ARCADE GAME	Acclaim	£39.99	Use either the joypad or the Menacer. Nine stages of fantastic virtual realism.	9
TEST DRIVE 2: THE DUEL	Ballistic	£34.99	The success of this game lies in the car handling which feels just like the real thing.	8
THUNDER FORCE II	Sega	£34.99	Strong challenge and overall presentation with some super backdrops.	7
THUNDER FORCE III	Sega	£34.99	Better than the original, this will have you playing for ages.	8
THUNDER FORCE IV	Sega	£39.99	Magnificent graphics and gameplay. Shoot-'em-up at the peak.	9
THUNDERFOX		Import	Check machine compatibility, but you're not missing anything.	3
THUNDER PRO WRESTLING		Import	Limited moves means it's not much fun to play	5
TIGER HELI		Import	Totally uninspiring helicopter game with dubious graphics.	2
TINY TOON ADVENTURES	Konami	£39.99	Wonderful adventure that borrows much from the Warner Bros cartoons.	9
TOEJAM & EARL	Sega	£34.99	Cartoon graphics and some brilliant sampled sound. Weird sense of humour.	8
TOKI	Sega	£34.99	Great platformer with arcade-quality graphics. Bit too easy, though.	8
TORA! TORA! TORA!		Import	Average shoot-'em-up which has little to offer if you want something different.	7
TOXIC CRUSADERS		Import	Take control of Toxie and help him in this dire scrolling arcade adventure.	3
TRAMPOLINE TERROR		Import	Nothing to do with trampolines. Not even bouncy or fun.	1
TROUBLE SHOOTER		Import	Female stars in Forgotten Worlds type game. Makes for a good looking and colourful game.	7
TRUXTON	Sega	£34.99	A normal but easy vertical shoot-'em-up that's immense fun. *Tatsujin* on import.	8
TURBO OUT RUN	Sega	£39.99	*Out Run* was brilliant, this sadly lacks any turbo charge.	4
TURRICAN	Ballistic	£34.99	The innovative shooting technique adds a new twist to this platform shoot-'em-up.	8
TWIN COBRA	Sega	£34.99	Control a helicopter through dreary battle zones.	4
TWIN HAWK	Sega	£34.99	Average shoot-'em-up that is very easy.	5
TWINKLE TALE		Import	A psychedelic Japanese shoot-'em-up which plays well. Intense and challenging.	8
TWO CRUDE DUDES	Sega	£34.99	The stars are two muscle men who are hell-bent on going on the rampage. Destructive fun.	8
ULTIMATE QIX		Import	Plays like Othello, but totally rubbish with very few console-inspired surprises.	4
ULTIMATE SOCCER	Sega	£39.99	Fast, furious and full of options, but fails to deliver in the all-important gameplay department.	5
UNDEADLINE		Import	Zombie level guardians add humour to this shoot-'em-up. Wicked title.	8
UNIVERSAL SOLDIER	Accolade	£39.99	Not as tough as it looks, but super gameplay. Could be called Turrican 2.	8
VALIS		Import	The original hack-'em-till-they-die arcade adventure. Worth a playtest for a laugh.	7
VALIS III		Import	Looks great but is incredibly boring. Should have left it at *Valis*.	6
VAPOR TRAIL		Import	Fun to play with some very fast gameplay, but not enough challenges.	5

SOKOBHAN		Import	Not much fun as you move crates around a warehouse. Like working at Tesco.	5
SOL-FEACE		Import	A CD conversion without the sound quality. A very average shoot-'em-up.	5
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG	Sega	£34.99	A bit easy now, but still the first truly outstanding Mega Drive game.	8
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2	Sega	£39.99	Best game of 1992, this time Sonic has a mate, and again Sonic's miles ahead of the rest.	9
SPACE HARRIER II	Sega	£34.99	Awkward playing view and poor sound don't help this weak game.	5
SPACE INVADERS '90		Import	Classic game updated. Still holds all the magic, but lacks the polish.	6
SPEEDBALL II	Virgin	£39.99	Techno-rugby for the insane – pitch and players are both superb giving a futuristic feel.	9
SPIDER-MAN	Sega	£39.99	Strong story screens and very tough gameplay on this brilliant platform beat-'em-up.	8
SPLATTERHOUSE 2	Namco	£39.95	Eight stages of blood-thirsty and totally outrageous graphics, combined with equally sadistic music.	8
SPLATTERHOUSE 3	Namco	Import	More gruesome and gory goings-on in the land where Jason Vorhees is king.	8
SPORTS TALK BASEBALL	Sega	£39.95	Strong sim based on *Montana II* speech system. Works well, excellent graphics and great fun.	8
STAR CRUISER		Import	Completely unplayable due to Japanese text. For language students only.	3
STARFLIGHT	Electronic Arts	£49.99	Deep space mining is the name of this game. Plenty of combat and strategy.	8
STEEL EMPIRE	Acclaim	£39.95	Horizontal shoot-'em-up with huge sprites, which tends to become monotonous.	5
STEEL TALONS	Domark	£39.99	Chopper combat at a lower level. Not exactly *Desert Strike*.	5
STORMLORD	Ballistic	Import	Adventure game with intriguing but not difficult puzzles	7
STREET SMART	Sega	£34.99	Beat-'em-up with limited gameplay due to the small array of martial arts moves.	6
STREETS OF RAGE	Sega	£34.99	Beat-'em-up that was well-hyped but lacks challenge. Moves and sound FX make up for this.	8
STREETS OF RAGE II	Sega	£44.99	16Mbit cart which has been used to its full potential. Teamplay and versus modes make it worthwhile.	9
STRIDER	Sega	£44.99	All stages bar the last are easily completed. Held together by colourful graphics and smooth sprites.	8
STRIDER II	US Gold	£44.99	More of the same slick Strider action, but little development on the original action adventure.	7
SUNSET RIDERS	Konami	£39.99	Authentic cowboy and indian action on this platform shooter that shouldn't be ignored.	8
SUPERMAN	Virgin	£39.99	Pretty difficult which in turn makes it frustrating. A bit of a disappointment.	6
SUPER AIRWOLF		Import	Also known as *Crossfire*, this shoot-'em-up packs a punch. No TV tie-in evident, though.	7
SUPER BATTLETANK		Import	Tank sim that may appeal to your basic instincts, ie, point, shoot, blow up.	3
VERYTEX		Import	Scrolling shooter that is actually quite good. Tough guardians and enemies throughout.	8
WANI WANI WORLD		Import	Psychedelic graphics, with very addictive two-player mode. Like *Bubble Bobble*.	8
WARDNER SPECIAL		Import	Usual elements, but with sheer lack of detail from this poor arcade shooter conversion.	4
WARPSPEED	Accolade	£34.99	Deep space shoot-'em-up lacking enough strategy to keep *Elite* fans enthralled.	6
WARSONG		Import	Wargame where you'll have to be patient to appreciate it. One for armchair generals.	8
WHEEL OF FORTUNE	Gametek	Import	Absolute rubbish with 4500 uninteresting questions	2
WHERE IN THE WORLD IS...?	Electronic Arts	£39.99	Edutainment game that tends to become boring for the experienced adventurer.	6
WHERE IN TIME IS...?	Electronic Arts	£49.99	More successful attempt than its predecessor.	8
WHIP RUSH	Sega	£34.99	Very playable and extremely fast shoot-'em-up with good gameplay. Dodgy title.	8
WINTER CHALLENGE	Ballistic	£39.99	Eight different events make up this snow-laden epic. Very original.	8
WONDER BOY III	Sega	£34.99	Two-player game is brilliant fun and very interactive. Recommended for two players only.	7
WONDER BOY IV	Sega	£39.99	More fun than the original, but not an all-time classic.	8
WONDER BOY V	Sega	£39.99	Should have stopped by now, no difference really.	7
WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD	US Gold	£39.99	Has speech samples, but nowhere near PGA Golf.	6
WORLD CUP ITALIA 90	Sega	£29.99	Limited moves, but still pretty good. Reasonably priced which is definitely a plus point.	8
WORLD OF ILLUSION	Sega	£39.99	Outstanding Disney graphics and animation, which will keep young and old compelled.	9
WRESTLE WAR	Sega	£34.99	Getting the moves worked out with your joypad is more hard work than the actual game.	7
XDR		Import	Mysterious shoot-'em-up, mainly due to Jap text base. Mediocre gameplay.	5
XENON II	Virgin	£39.99	Excellent shoot-'em-up that falters slightly with occasional screen slowdown.	8
X-MEN	Sega	£34.99	Should really have done a straight conversion from the arcade, but it's still okay.	7
Y'S 3: WANDERERS FROM Y'S	Sega		In-depth RPG which offers a considerable challenge. Fans of tough games will love it.	8
ZANY GOLF	Electronic Arts	£39.99	More insane than crazy golf at the seaside. Fun game with very polished presentation.	9
ZERO WING	Sega	£39.95	Horizontal shooter which is flawed by its small graphics and ease of completion.	7
ZOOM	Sega	£29.99	Cheap and cheerful puzzler. Average graphics and sound. Soon gets boring and frustrating	4

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SHERLOCK HOLMES II

Power review ---------pages 40-42

"Help solve three more mysteries that Sherlock has been brought in to investigate. The two CDs hold more background info, longer movies and tougher travels than the previous game, and the save game facility means you'll keep coming back for more. "

power saver price -------£38.99

THE ADDAMS FAMILY

Power review ---------pages 44-47

"Directly converted from the SNES version, this game brings all the characters from the movie to life on your Mega Drive. You get to control Gomez as he travels through the many (secret) rooms of his massive mansion, and even into his graveyard.."

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SILPHEED

Power review ---------pages 48-51

"The most hyped Mega-CD game of the year features massive polygon spaceships speeding through the skies. All you have is a tiny little spaceship, but tons of weapons and shields are lying around the galaxy waiting to be picked up."

power saver price -------£38.99

BUBSY

Power review ---------pages 52-55

"This cat's cooler than Sonic and may even match him for speed. Bubsy is on a quest for yarn and you must take him through hundreds of bright, vivid screens in his search for yarnballs. But this is one cat who hasn't got nine lives, so take it carefully."

power saver price -------£38.99

ROCKET KNIGHT

Power review ---------pages 56-59

"TFrom the people that brought us *Tiny Toon Adventures*, another cheeky little cartoon character looking for help. Sparkster's a knight in the mould of *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* and must traverse seven levels to rescue the king's sweet daughter, Sherry. "

power saver price -------£43.99

MORTAL KOMBAT

Power review ---------pages 60-63

"Launched on Mortal Monday (September 13), Acclaim are hoping this is the one to put *Street Fighter II* in the shade. It has certainly gained lots of attention for its brutality, which, if nothing else, should ensure you get major satisfaction from the fighting."

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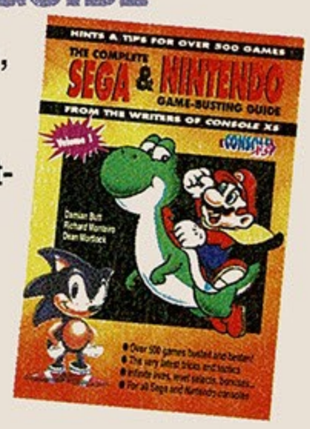

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POWER charts

HIGH STREET CHARTS

Compiled with the help of HMV, Our Price and Virgin.

mega drive

position	last month	months in chart	game title
1	(7)	2	**Jungle Strike**

Popular follow-up to *Desert Strike* pits you against Ortega's ruthless son.

2	(10)	2	**Micro Machines**

US Gold's unplayable conversion of Anco's top computer footy game.

3	(3)	2	**Flashback**

Super smooth animation in one of the year's best platform adventures.

4	(1)	2	**Cool Spot**

Follow the adventures of the 7-UP's Spot in Virgin's summer scorcher.

5	(-)	1	**Bubsy**

Super cute Sonic-basher from Accolade. Bigger, brighter and just as fast.

6	(2)	2	**Super Kick Off**

US Gold's unplayable conversion of Anco's top computer footy game.

7	(6)	2	**PGA Tour Golf II**

Uprated and much better version takes you around America's top courses.

8	(-)	1	**Muhammad Ali's**

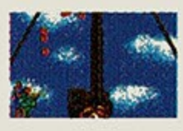
The greatest boxer in history successfully hosts Virgin's bombastic bruiser.

9	(9)	2	**Ecco the Dolphin**

Much-lauded and hyped ocean adventure; Sega's attempt to reinvent Flipper.

10	(-)	1	**Superman**

Bodged UK version of appalling import game selling on the strength of the licence.



mega-cd

1	(-)	1	**Night Trap**

Controversial 15-rated action adventure with full motion action from well shot footage.

2	(-)	1	**Final Fight CD**

Highly praised two-player conversion of the arcade beat-'em-up – better than the SNES attempt.

3	(2)	2	**Jaguar XJ220**

Core/Sega's poor, unexploited attempt to put a fast track racer on CD.

4	(1)	2	**Road Avenger**

Official version of the original futuristic Wolfteam racer *Road Blaster FX*.

5	(3)	2	**Sherlock Holmes**

Interesting concept game that fails to ignite the expected intrigue and mystery.

INDEPENDENT CHARTS

Compiled with the help of Video Games Centre and Lansdowne computers.

mega drive

position	last month	months in chart	game title
1	(-)	1	**Jungle Strike**

EA's successful sequel to *Desert Strike,* their top-selling shoot-'em-up adventure.

2	(-)	1	**Shining Force**

Massive 12Mbit follow-up to *Shining in the Darkness* now in English.

3	(2)	2	**Flashback**

US Gold's conversion of the successful Delphine computer adventure.

4	(10)	2	**Micro Machines**

They are small, they are fast and they are living inside your Sega – worried?

5	(5)	2	**Super Kick Off**

Simple conversion capitalizes on the original's successful footballing format.

6	(1)	2	**Cool Spot**

Dave Perry's beautiful, humorous adventure in search of ultimate coolness.

7	(8)	2	**Tiny Toon Adventures**

The shrunken cartoon characters provide much fun in Konami's adventure.

8	(-)	1	**TMNT**

The green cartoon characters provide much fun in Konami's adventure.

9	(3)	2	**J League Pro Striker**

Totally realistic and very playable tie-in for the start of the Japanese league.

10	(4)	2	**Andre Agassi Tennis**

He's out of Wimbledon, shaved his chest and now causing havoc on Sega.

mega-cd

1	(1)	2	**Final Fight CD**

The ultimate brutal beat-'em-up on any compact disc format is a must-buy.

2	(-)	1	**Silpheed**

The first of Sega's new generation of Mega-CD games. Over-hyped, over-priced and over here.

3	(2)	2	**Ecco**

Complete with Q-sound and a handful of extra levels, the dolphin dives in.

4	(3)	2	**Batman Returns**

Including a tough driving section, the draw here is the great CD soundtrack.

5	(5)	1	**Time Gal**

The cute and crazy girl from Japan squeaks her through attractive timezones.

It ain't over till...

Irish band, The Fat Lady Sings, were formed in March 1986. Their strong indie roots have assured them a loyal following in both the UK and USA, compounded by their insistence for retaining their traditional songwriting skills and constant touring. The critically-acclaimed trio finished their Twist Tour in 1992, and immediately got to work on their latest album, Johnson. Life on the road is just one big game of Sonic for them, as lead singer/songwriter Nick Kelly explains...

The Fat Lady Sings are Nick Kelly (right), Jim Bradshaw (left) and Dermot Lynch (centre). Their latest album Johnson, on East West records, was released on August 2, and features the previous-released singles Show of Mystic and Drunkard Logic.

The life of a touring band is not all it may seem: no sex (I live on a bus with eight men, each with their own rancid sock collection), no drugs (too expensive, and we're all quite disorientated and incoherent enough, au naturel), and large amounts of overnight driving broken only by service station food between each small helping of rock 'n' roll. However, the one thing which this lifestyle does provide us with is buckets of time to kill. Many tour bus companies specialising in providing transport for rock bands have installed consoles in their vehicles along with the more traditional entertainment facilities.

On our last UK tour, *Sonic 2* had just been released so we spent most of our drives trying to crack it. (When we were recording our new album late last year, our producer introduced us to the first *Sonic* on his Game Gear – he ended up buying us a band Game Gear because he couldn't get us off his one!)

Sonic 2 seemed a lot harder on the Mega Drive than on the Game Gear – though possibly bumpy roads accounted for some of our difficulties – the rings are more difficult to hang onto, so achieving bonus levels was a rare treat when we began. The bonus levels themselves were excellent, though, once again the maximum ring acquisition took a lot of practice.

Level three, with the endless pinball bouncing, was probably our favourite level. The first two levels were tricky rather than impossible. There seem to be far more extra lives/rings/power-ups hidden arbitrarily in unexpected places than in the original *Sonic*, and this means lots of experimentation if you want to build up maximum lives in the early levels.

The game really does take a fair bit of time to master, which I guess means that it's good value for money. If there's one criticism which we could make, it would be that there's far too much having to go right back to the start. It takes so much effort to build up extra lives, and it's so easy to lose them, and we really resented the dearth of continues.

Funnily enough, the bosses at the end of each level we found to be far easier to diss than on the Game Gear – maybe it was to compensate for all the standard level baddies being such a pain.

Tips? Whenever you jump passed the bonus level icons, you lose all the rings you are holding, but all the rings, extra lives, etc, on the screen replenish themselves while you're bonusing away. Therefore, if you want to really build up lives in the early levels (essential for worry-reduced later levels), ensure that you have acquired just over 100 rings – and therefore an extra life – before jumping passed the icons.

For our next tour, we're going to try the new *Mickey & Donald* game, which looks particularly happening (*Castle of Illusion* was another band favourite on the Game Gear). Of course, by then we'll probably be requesting a Mega Drive on our brand-new Lear jet...

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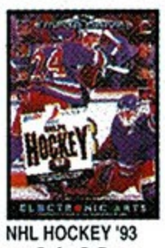
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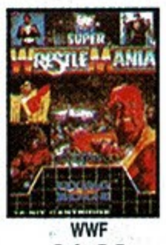
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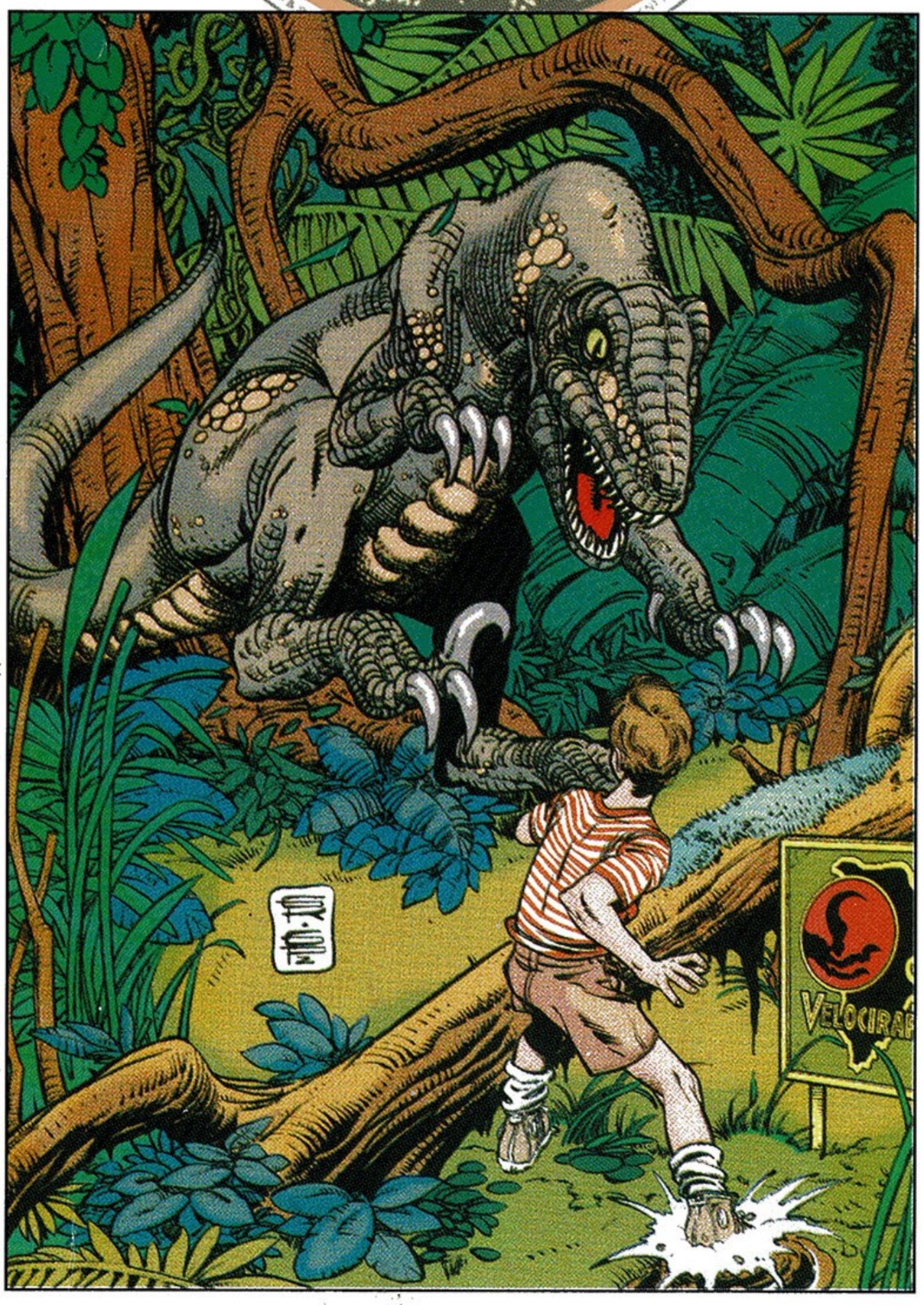

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